50 DEAD IN RESTAURANT BOMB BLAST, PG 12

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Celebrity Buzz
No pics of Cate's special day
pg 38

Ethanol fuels part of premier's energy plan

BIOFUEL Gasoline and diesel in Alberta must be made with a certain amount of ethanol by 2010 under a new, five-point plan released by the provincial government yesterday.

The plan, said Premier Ed Stelmach, will make Alberta's energy sector "evolve" through tough economic times by making it more marketable.

"This is ensuring Alberta keeps pace with Saskatchewan and other provinces that have put in a fuel standard," said Stelmach.

Under the new plan, gas must contain five per cent renewable fuel. Diesel must contain two per cent biofuels.

The plan also calls for more support for Alberta's petrochemical plants and upgraders. **METRO EDMONTON**

VIDEO: Critics remain skeptical about new energy plan at metronews.ca/local

Comments pg 20
Fatigue sets in on politics

Business pg 22
Oil companies cut '09 capital

Movies pg 30

Benjamin Button's Golden Globe nod

Ho Ho Jolly chocolate Nick

ROBIN KUNISKI/FOR METRO CALGARY

Letty Terrazas places a three-foot, 25-pound chocolate Santa Claus at the front of the Bernard Callebaut store on Macleod Trail. There are eight, $825 St. Nicks to be raffled off to raise money for the Food and Nutritions in Schools program, part of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary.

Tasers to be tested

NEIL MACKINNON
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Instead of yanking them directly out of service, the province announced they will systematically test all 400 possibly faulty Tasers built before 2006, Solicitor General Fred Lindsay said Thursday.

While there are about 900 Tasers in the province, only the X-26 models will undergo reviews at both SAIT and NAIT starting in January, Lindsay said, adding standardized tests on all remaining Tasers in the province will be conducted randomly.

"We weighed the pros and cons of what steps we take and we're convinced we did the responsible thing," Lindsay said.

An independent CBC/Radio Canada report found that four of 41 tested X-26 model Tasers discharged more juice than manufacturers said was possible. Taser International decried the study for being scientifically unsound, but Lindsay said the government must run their own tests to be sure.

"Any time you get two different experts involved in testing a device, there's some controversy around as to which testing is more accurate … we're going to do some thorough testing of our own," he said.

Nearly half of the X-26 models in the province belong to Calgary's police service. Chief Rick Hanson supports the move toward testing and is happy the province isn't pulling the stun guns until test results are finalized.

"I would feel very uncomfortable removing Tasers as a tool for our officers on the street," Hanson said. "I'd rather have one of our officers default to a Taser than have no option and have to go directly to deadly force."

> "Any time you get two different experts involved in testing a device, there's some controversy ..."
> Fred Lindsay

City needs rolling tally: Ald. Fox-Mellway

NEIL MACKINNON
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It could make aldermanic lives easier, provide an ongoing sense of just how high potential property taxes are creeping and Ald. Linda Fox-Mellway doesn't understand why it wasn't done a long time ago.

Calgary's recently approved 19.2 per cent property tax hike was born through a series of rubber-stamped reports, and at budget time, some alderman stressed a need for a rolling tally of approved projects throughout the year.

In a motion that comes before council Monday, Fox-Mellway seeks its approval to cumulatively track approved spending in a quarterly report for council's perusal.

"Some people were surprised that the tax hike was so high, but as a council, we made those decisions over the past three years and those decisions have financial repercussions," Fox-Mellway said.

University of Calgary public policy specialist Ronald Kneebone said such a "substantial" system would come with "a fairly high price tag" and will only provide ballpark numbers.

"Still, ball park figures should be enough to keep it from being a surprise, not that it should have been anyways because we're paying these people to keep track of their decisions themselves," Kneebone said.

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U.S. child predator closer to extradition

A Texas child predator captured in Calgary earlier this week is one step closer to heading back to the United States to face charges of aggravated sexual assault on a child after his detention review order yesterday. **METRO CALGARY**

Local

L'il orphan Annie returning

The popular musical Annie is back for its 30th anniversary tour and coming to tell the story of little orphan Annie in Calgary at the Jubilee Auditorium Feb 17 to 22, 2009. Tickets for the show go on sale on Dec. 15 at all Ticketmaster locations. **METRO CALGARY**

U of C prof dissects health care in study

NEIL MACKINNON
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RESEARCH Gerry Boychuk hacked into a sacred cow and he hopes its entrails stimulate a renewed health care debate.

While proponents on both sides of Canada's health care divide have perpetuated misconceptions about the country's health act for political gain, the University of Calgary professor released new research Thursday, indicating there are no provisions barring a mixture of private and public service.

"Both sides have benefited by purporting what's permitted under the health act and the result has been a lack of clarity," said Boychuk. "Ultimately, the debate has become frozen and what we truly need to unlock that is a more open honest, healthy discussion with a starting point of a proper, clear understanding of the issue."

Stay warm in big chill

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

ROBIN KUNISKI/FOR METRO CALGARY

Kim Toller walks with her bundled-up son Garyn Hnatiuk, 8, after school Thursday. Calgary EMS and the CBE are both asking parents to take extra care in keeping kids warm in the outdoors as temperatures are expected to plummet over the weekend.

With temperatures set to drastically dip over the weekend, parents are warned to prepare their children for the cold snap.

Beginning Friday, the temperatures are expected to plunge to –21 C overnight and by Sunday a freezing –27 C, and that's without the wind-chill factor.

EMS spokesperson Stuart Brideaux said the looming deep freeze can put those most susceptible to the cold — children — at risk.

"Certainly they should make sure they are dressed appropriately for the conditions and make sure they cover their fingers, toes, ears and nose properly," he said. "They should wear layers and wear properly insulated shoe wear."

Brideaux said people lose most of their body heat through their heads and since children have proportionally large heads, it's especially important for them to wear toques.

"They are more susceptible to heat loss if their mittens or hats get wet; they have to trade them for dry right away or they won't stay warm," he added.

Ted Flitton, spokesperson for the Calgary Board of Education said parents should make sure children are dressed properly before dropping them off and try to avoid leaving them at bus stops.

"But if they are at a bus station, they should have some kind of contingency plan in case the bus doesn't come and they aren't stuck waiting in the cold," Flitton added.

Seed in urgent need of hampers

DONATIONS Fill a hamper with food and fill a heart with hope this Christmas through the Mustard Seed's Christmas Hamper Campaign.The agency is in urgent need of hampers this holiday season and is calling out for Calgarians to open their hearts.

Turkey, vegetables, potatoes and much more can be donated to help give a less fortunate family a holiday dinner.

Donations will be accepted at either Mustard Seed location. **METRO CALGARY**

Grits want details of health report

REVIEW The Alberta Liberals are demanding the government release a 15-week review of health service delivery in Alberta.

Hugh MacDonald, the Liberal shadow minister for health and wellness wants the McKinsey and Company review released because he says Albertans have a right to see it.

He says the report cost taxpayers $1 million more than it was supposed to.

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ROBIN KUNISKI/FOR METRO CALAGARY

Leah Milner reads to Bert Pritchard-Passage, 6, at Cappy Smart School as part of the Book Bags for Kids program.

Book Bags bring smiles to students

KRISTA SYLVESTER
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Raymond Si loves to read books — in his words, any kind of books. So when Books Bags for Kids visited his school Thursday he was ecstatic.

"I love reading, I actually spend about two hours reading a book, and sometimes it takes less. I like chapter books, fiction, and really just about anything," the 11-year-old Grade 6 student said.

He was one of a thousand students receiving books this week in schools across the city through the Book Bags for Kids program at the Calgary Board of Education.

The school trustee of Wards 5 and 10 said the books make a difference in the children's lives.

"They don't expect this gift and they really appreciate it. They realize the importance of reading and it thrills them to receive these bags," Pamela King said.

And principal of Cappy Smart School Barb McPherson echoed her excitement.

"It's just so amazing to see them look through the bags and see their faces light up. We really enjoy it," she said.

Throughout the week approximately 4,200 books were given out to children across 24 CBE schools.

metronews.ca
WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Critics are skeptical about new Alberta energy plan at **metronews.ca/local**
Video Dave Taylor thinks he can lead Liberals out of the wilderness at **metronews.ca/local**
Read Harper to appoint senators before Christmas at **metronews.ca/canada**

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Cops look to set bait for car thieves

The Calgary Police Service's bait cars will be unrolled starting next week in an effort to curb the number of car thefts across the city. The cars are armed with a GPS system and can lock thieves inside. **METRO CALGARY**

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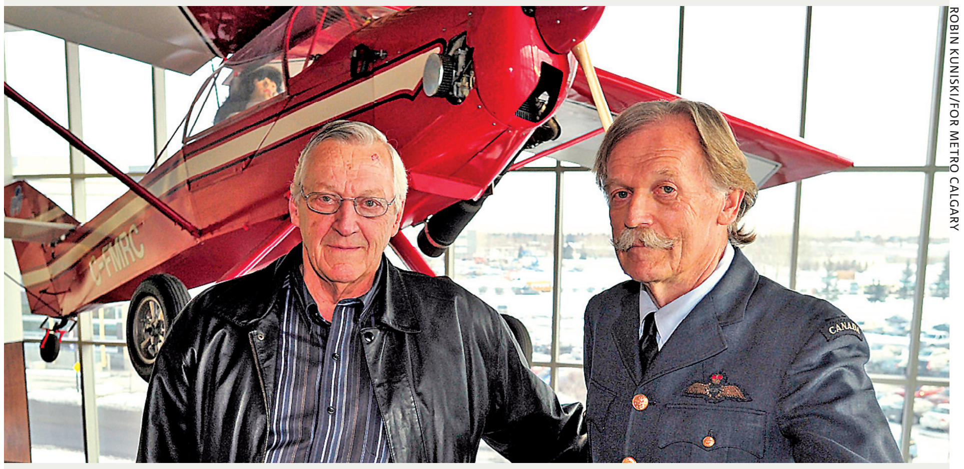
Mount Royal School celebrates aviation program


ROBIN KUNISKI/FOR METRO CALGARY

Jack Peacock, left, and Ralph Langemann, faculty member and former RCAF pilot, stand before a single-seater SnowBird I, hung from the rafters at Mount Royal College Wednesday in honour of the school's aviation history. The Aviation Diploma program at the school took flight in 1970.

Telework to ease traffic: CED

KRISTA SYLVESTER
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Kathleen Matthews knows the difference working from home has made for her in her job.

The senior sales management employee just started "teleworking" from home this year and said it has saved the company thousands.

"Working from home means we don't need to have an office, which is good because I am the only one working in the Calgary area for our company," Matthews said.

What Matthews values most is not driving to and from the office during rush hour everyday.

"I only have to drive to appointments now, so I try to make them during the less busy times of day. It really helps with the cost of gas, too," she added.

Calgary Economic Development (CED) would like to see more employers and employees in the city working together to "telework" from home, which would relieve pressure on the roads and help save the environment from toxic gas emissions.

Package prompts evacuation

WAL-MART A suspicious package found at the Northland Shopping Centre Wal-Mart forced its evacuation around 10:30 a.m. yesterday morning.

An employee, sorting through merchandise, happened across a suspicious item and called Calgary police and, while the store was evacuated as a precautionary measure, the package was found to contain a damaged electronic device hidden under several other items.

METRO CALGARY

Vacancy rates up in Calgary: Report

APARTMENTS A Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation report released yesterday indicated that apartment vacancy rates in Calgary rose by more than half a percentage point to 2.1 per cent in October comparer to the same month in 2007.

However, rent for the average two-bedroom rose by $59 between October 2007 and 2008 to an average of $1,148 per month.

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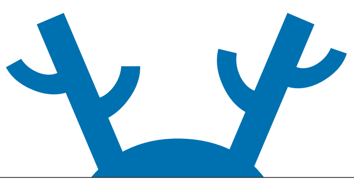
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Ending violence against sex workers
On Dec. 17 AIDS Calgary is hosting a march along Stephen Avenue at 5 p.m. to commemorate the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers. For more information visit www.aidscalgary.org. **METRO CALGARY**

No liftoff for bulging Alberta tabby

NEIL MACKINNON
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Presents apparently come first and now plump old Charlie's in for a long haul home at Christmas.

About 38 hours, return trip, in a truck with three people and a dog.

Intentions were to fly Charlie, a 22-pound Garfield-esque tabby cat, back to at least Winnipeg but when his owner Kim Fowler, 23, inquired with Air Canada, she learned pets wouldn't be allowed as a Christmas time weight restriction was in effect from Dec. 18 to Jan. 7.

Hauling presents around the country, Fowler surmises, has taken a priority over getting her portly feline home for the holidays.

"This is the time of year when we see the highest volumes of people travelling and who travel with the highest volumes of baggage," said Air Canada's Angela Mah. Much to Fowler's chagrin, a followup call to Westjet revealed a similar restriction.

Fowler could, she found out, put Charlie in a small kennel and take him on the plane, except for one thing.

He'd need a crash diet as animals on Westjet flights have to be under 22 pounds, kennel included, to fit under their seats.

Kim Fowler and Charlie will have to take to the roads as a prohibition on flying pets is in place over the holidays.
NEIL MACKINNON/METRO CALGARY

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Youth helping feed Calgary's hungry kids

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

FOOD It all started with a newspaper article and ended with an 11-year-old boy raising almost $2,000 to help feed school children.

Jesse Buker read a news story about kids in Calgary who go to school hungry.

"Mom, I eat three meals a day and these kids get nothing," he said to his mom.

Buker made flyers and posters after deciding to raise money for Education Matters through the Boys and girls Club of Calgary and the Calgary Board of Education.

Buker set a goal of $2,000 and managed to raise $1,604 to help feed hungry school children in and around his community.

"We are very proud of him. He's never really done anything like this before and he did an amazing job," his mother Carri said.

> **"We are very proud of him. He's never really done anything like this before."** Carri Buker

News in brief

STAMPEDE The Calgary Stampede Rodeo prize just got a little bit sweeter. The Stampede announced yesterday that for the first time ever the outdoor rodeo prize will increase to $2 million from $1.875 million last year. "The Calgary Stampede continues to lead the way in the world of rodeo," Mike Whittle of the Stampede said in a release. **METRO CALGARY**

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Supreme Court denies Schreiber The Supreme Court has ruled, in a decision without comment, that it would not review Karlheinz Schreiber's latest bid to block his extradition from Canada. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Canada

Ottawa broke law on EI: Court

Fees unlawfully turned into 'payroll tax' for years

The federal government collected employment insurance premiums "unlawfully" for three years, the Supreme Court of Canada said in a decision that raises questions about what will happen to the money paid into government coffers by employers and employees during that time.

In a 7-0 judgment, the court rejected arguments by two Quebec unions that the former Liberal government under then-prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin had deliberately racked up huge employment insurance surpluses and then diverted them to help balance the federal budget.

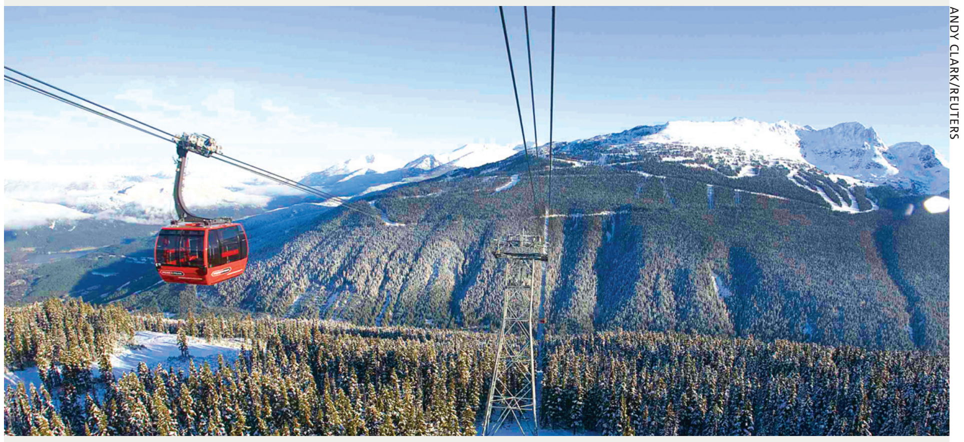
But the court found that EI premiums in 2002, 2003 and 2005 had been collected "unlawfully, without the necessary legislative authorization" from Parliament. That's because the federal cabinet was given the discretion to set the rates, without the criteria that had previously been used to guide those decisions.

Employment insurance was effectively transformed from a regulatory scheme into "a payroll tax," Justice Louise LeBel wrote for the unanimous court. Invoking "the ancient, but fundamental, principle of our democratic system that there should be no taxation without representation," he said it was not clear that Parliament had intended to delegate its taxing authority, making the collection of EI premiums in those years illegal. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Government response

- "Canadian employers and employees can be confident that any future revenues raised from EI premiums will go exclusively towards paying benefits and reducing EI premiums," said a statement from the department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

British Columbia **Great gondola**



ANDY CLARK/REUTERS

A gondola lift carries skiers on the Peak 2 Peak pass between Whistler and Blackcomb mountains in Whistler, B.C., Thursday. At 3,024 metres, the Peak 2 Peak has four support towers and is the world's longest unsupported span. Whistler will be the site of the alpine and nordic events of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. The gondola officially opens Friday.

Conservatives likely to remain in power federally

ANALYSIS Although Canadian opposition parties are still furious with the minority Conservative government, they now seem less likely to bring down Prime Minister Stephen Harper over the budget in January.

Both sides realize there are major threats to pushing the conflict any further.

If Harper continues to antagonize his opponents, they will bring down the government and leave the decision on what to do next to Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean.

The battles have generated public and media contempt, especially among those who feel Harper sparked the crisis by delivering a provocative fiscal update two weeks ago.

"If he can come forward with a budget that serves the national interest of our country, there might be something to talk about here," Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff recently told the CBC.

Along with Ignatieff's apparent willingness to work with Harper, the party is also indebted and has an inefficient fundraising arm.

This all suggests that the Liberals will find a way to either back Harper's budget or not to bring him down over it. **REUTERS**

> **"There might be something to talk about here."**
> Michael Ignatieff

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Family being charged with being organized crime group
Eight members of the same family, arrested on drug and weapons charges following several police raids in southwestern New Brunswick, made brief court appearances in Moncton Thursday and faced a total of 57 charges, including being members of an organized crime group. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Long road to recovery

JEFF HODSON
Metro Canada

JEFF HODSON/METRO CANADA

Trevor Greene and fiancée Debbie Lepore shown outside their hotel in Vancouver on Thursday. Greene had his head split open during an axe attack while serving in Afghanistan. A documentary following the pair during Greene's recovery is set to air Friday and Saturday on CTV.

The past 2½ years have been a "marathon of baby steps" for a Vancouver army reservist whose brain was split by an axe in a horrific attack in Afghanistan.

Capt. Trevor Greene said he's never been a patient man and the agonizing slowness of his progress has been the most difficult part of his recovery.

"It's like being frozen in an iceberg and slowly thawing out," said Greene, originally from Cape Breton, at a hotel in Vancouver on Thursday.

In March 2006, Greene, a journalist and author, was a co-operation officer in a platoon of Canadian soldiers operating near Kandahar.

During a meeting with village elders, a youth ran up behind Greene and plunged an axe deep into his skull. Greene had taken off his helmet and the axe cleaved his brain in half.

Greene's recovery is the subject of a documentary, Peace Warrior, which airs tomorrow night (and repeats Sunday) on CTV.

The documentary, by North Vancouver's Sue Ridout, follows Greene, his fiancée Debbie Lepore and their three-year-old daughter Grace for 18 months as the family moves from an extended-care facility in B.C. to a brain injury centre in Alberta and finally to their new home in Nanaimo.

The pair plan to marry in July 2010.

"It'll be three years in March and we're looking good," said Lepore, who gave up her career as a chartered accountant to care for her fiancé.

"I'm very, very happy with what he has accomplished so far."

Greene, who is alert and has limited movement, said his goal is to walk and one-day hopes to accompany his daughter down the aisle at her wedding.

Airports infiltrated by crime groups: RCMP

1,326
The number of people working in Canadian airports that are believed to have links to organized crimes groups.

REPORT There are 38 organized crime groups with members or associates working at Pearson International Airport in Toronto, according to an RCMP study of smuggling at Canadian airports.

The groups smuggle humans, cocaine, marijuana and a stimulant called "khat" that predates the use of coffee, but is relatively new on Canadian streets, according to the RCMP study, called Project Spawn. The study examined criminal cases between January 2005 and August 2007 in the airports of Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax.

"The facilities are susceptible to criminal exploitation and infiltration, particularly at the major international airports that receive frequent flights from either source countries or transit countries for various types of contraband," the report states.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

ELEPHANTS Zoo elephants are living truncated lives, as little as one-third the lifespan of pachyderms in protected preserves, says a new study published in the journal Science. The study was co-authored by a top University of Guelph veterinarian in Ontario.

FEDERAL FRAUD A former federal civil servant has been sentenced to two years in prison for defrauding the federal government of $2.7 million. Alain Gagnon pleaded guilty to breach of trust and fraud over $5,000.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Not likely
Canada's housing market faces a downturn in 2009 but the chances of a real estate implosion like that one that struck the U.S. housing sector look remote. **REUTERS**

TIM WIECLAWSKI/METRO OTTAWA

A sticker expressing public frustration was put on a poster in front of the Elgin Street entrance to the city hall parking garage, where striking OC Transpo employees slowed traffic.

Strike snarls traffic in Ottawa

TIM WIECLAWSKI
tim.wieclawski@metronews.ca

No new face-to-face meetings took place yesterday as Ottawa residents struggled through another day without transit.

Both the morning and afternoon commutes stretched on much longer than usual, and Ottawa police officers directed traffic as it crawled through the downtown.

Mayor Larry O'Brien thanked residents for their patience during a difficult and frustrating time.

"While the union wants to be as disruptive as possible, the city wants a negotiated and fair settlement for the taxpayers and OC Transpo drivers so we can restore transit services as soon as possible," he said yesterday.

Despite adversity, striking transit employees seemed as determined as ever, insisting they will continue to strike until the city backed down on scheduling.

Transit Services Director Alain Mercier said the weekday scheduling system has been the source of inefficiencies and a bit unfair to drivers, and potentially unsafe because some drivers are able to "cherry-pick" and end up getting paid for a full days work, while less senior employees are scrambling for shifts.

"On the weekends, we organize all he work, so that it is equitable," he said. "We want to make sure that drivers get the full eight hours rest daily, because some of the employees at the end of the day didn't get the best pick of work."

Mercier said they have offered in the agreement to ensure no operator would work more than 13.5 hours.

one side

- The block-booking system proposed by the city, said one pickteter, would force him to work 14-hour days and only be paid for an eight-hour shift.

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New drug might help shrink breast tumours

The Novartis bone-strengthening drug Zometa may enhance the effects of chemotherapy, shrink breast tumours and help more women avoid a mastectomy, British researchers said. **REUTERS**

World

Obama eyeing climate deal

The U.S. Senate will let president-elect Barack Obama sign a UN pact to fight global warming in late 2009 even if U.S. climate laws are not yet in place, U.S. Senator John Kerry predicted yesterday. But Kerry, designated head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said on the sidelines of UN climate talks in Poland that China, India and Russia would also have to promise to cut greenhouse-gas emissions to win Senate blessing of any pact. **REUTERS**

Greek students march in protest

VIOLENCE Protesters hurled fire bombs at riot police, who answered with tear gas, as 4,000 Greek students marched yesterday in a sixth straight day of anti-government violence.

Riots across Greece, triggered by the police shooting of a teenager but fuelled by deep popular anger over corruption and economic hardship, have shaken the conservative government.

"Down with the government of murderers," read demonstrators' banners. Marchers chanted "Cops, Pigs, Murderers!" in the latest spasm of Greece's worst unrest since the aftermath of its 1967-74 military rule.

Helicopters hovered overhead as the protesters set fire to piles of garbage in the middle of deserted Athens avenues. **REUTERS**

Bomber kills 50 in Iraq

A suicide bomber killed about 50 people and wounded more than 100 on Thursday, including Kurdish and Arab officials, in a crowded restaurant near Iraq's ethnically mixed city of Kirkuk.

AKOO RASHEED/REUTERS

Iraqi policemen rush a child wounded in a bomb attack Thursday into a hospital in Kirkuk, 250 kilometres north of Baghdad. A suicide bomber killed about 50 people and wounded more than 100 yesterday in a crowded restaurant, police said.

The bomber detonated explosives inside the restaurant, shattering the calm of a major Muslim holiday, and killing at least one official from Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, who was eating there with other politicians after a meeting to discuss Kurdish-Arab tensions.

Police said the restaurant north of Kirkuk, a city disputed by ethnic Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen, was packed during lunch hour. The cavernous restaurant's floor was left littered with broken glass and spotted with blood, and plates of food and soda cans were abandoned on tables.

Brig.-Gen. Sarhat Qader, a local police official, put the toll at 50 dead and 109 wounded. A U.S. military statement said 45 were killed and 93 wounded.

It appeared to be the worst attack in Iraq since 63 people were killed by a truck bomb in Baghdad on June 17.

Violence has dropped sharply in recent months after more than five years of sectarian bloodshed and insurgency unleashed by the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. Iraqis have begun to venture out and resume normal life in areas where security is returning, but militants still stage regular attacks in volatile areas. Kirkuk has been one of the less violent cities.

Suicide bombings are generally attributed to Sunni Islamist al-Qaida.

The blast, in a well-known restaurant frequented by Kirkuk dignitaries, shook Iraq as Muslims celebrated Eid al-Adha, a four-day religious holiday.

Many people are off work and would be more likely to visit restaurants. **REUTERS**

U.S. troops

- Iraq will need a U.S. troop presence to help build up its military forces past the newly agreed to three-year deadline for the withdrawal of American soldiers, a senior Iraqi official said.

U.S. teen marijuana use drags

STUDY Recent declines in marijuana use by U.S. teens appear to have stalled this year and their abuse of prescription drugs remains at worrisome levels, researchers said.

The annual survey of U.S. teen drug use, conducted by University of Michigan researchers for the U.S. government, also found continuing declines in cigarette smoking and alcohol use.

Marijuana is the most commonly used of the illicit drugs and its use had been in a slow but steady decrease this decade, but that appeared to halt this year, researchers said.

The survey showed a persistent worrisome rate of abuse of prescription medications, including the powerful painkillers Vicodin and Oxycontin, with little change in the past six years. **REUTERS**

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Obama puts Daschle at head of healthcare reform

U.S. president-elect Barack Obama yesterday chose former Sen. Tom Daschle to spearhead healthcare reform — putting a Washington veteran in charge of one of the most ambitious gambles of his administration. Many in the U.S. cannot afford basic care and 15 per cent of the country — about 46 million people — are uninsured. **REUTERS**

Illinois debt sale halted by charges

Corruption charges filed against Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich forced the delay of a $1.4 billion debt sale needed to keep the state's nursing homes open, state troopers' cars fueled and prisoners fed, officials said yesterday.

Without money from the debt sale the state was facing a record unpaid bill backlog nearing $4 billion.

On Tuesday, the governor and his chief of staff were charged with corruption by federal prosecutors.

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan said she was reviewing whether she can tell investors there is no pending or actual litigation that could affect the debt or any controversy concerning the governor's ability to hold office.

The deal cannot go through without the attorney general's certification.

A spokeswoman for State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias said the attorney general's concerns held up the debt sale planned for Thursday. The competitive sale, which was postponed until Tuesday, had been generating interest from potential bidders in the municipal bond market.

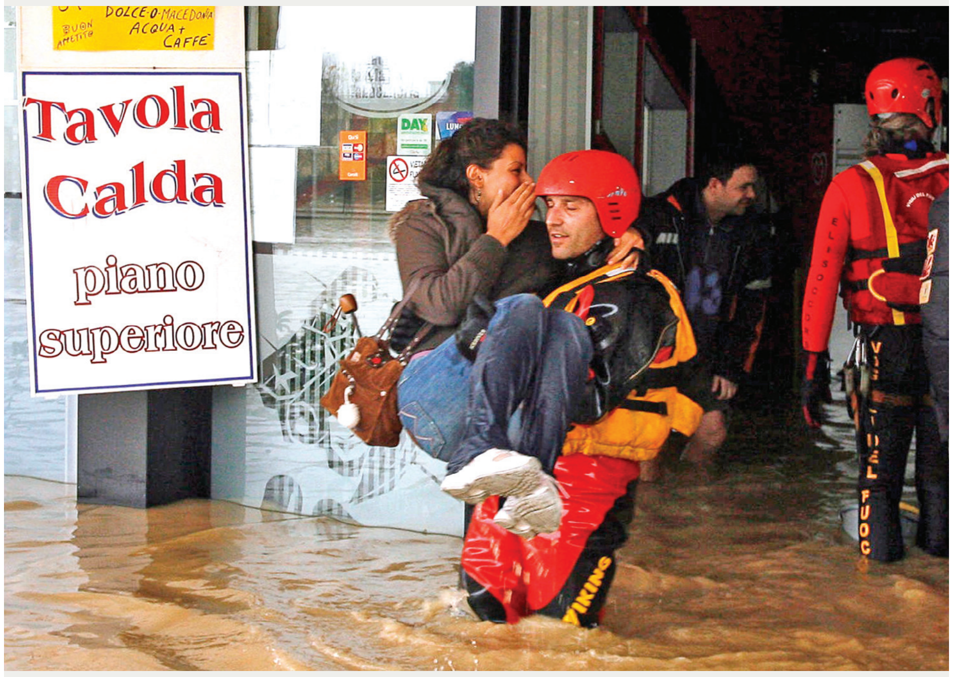
The governor's office has not cited a specific reason for the note sale delay.

The state's woes led Standard & Poor's Ratings Services to place Illinois' "AA" general obligation rating on review for a possible downgrade. **REUTERS**

Debt's possible impact

- Illinois Comptroller Dan Hynes warned last month that if the state ignored a record nearly $4 billion backlog in its bills, creditors could curtail food deliveries to prisons and mental institutions, nursing homes and day-care centers may shutter, state police would be unable to fuel their cars, and the state may delay payments to school districts.

Rome State of emergency



REUTERS/PAULO SIQUEIRA

A rescuer carries a stranded woman from a flooded coffee bar near Via Tiburtina in Rome yesterday. Rome's mayor asked authorities to declare a state of emergency in the Italian capital after heavy rains and thunderstorms overnight caused floods and led to at least one death.

Venezuela indicts opposition leader

"The only thing missing is for them to investigate me for the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy." Manuel Rosales

CHARGES Venezuela indicted opposition leader Manuel Rosales on corruption charges yesterday, possibly weakening adversaries of leftist President Hugo Chavez as he seeks to deepen his self-styled revolution.

The indictment, which had been expected, came after the government this year blocked several opposition politicians from running for office, sparking criticism that Chavez was using the state to silence his political enemies.

The indictment opens the possibility that Rosales, who says the charges are trumped up, could be unable to run for president in the 2012 election. Chavez is opening a campaign for a constitutional amendment allowing him to stay in office after his current term ends.

"Today we've come to confront this political lynching that they are trying to do, a terrorist trial, a political trial," said Rosales, a former presidential candidate and mayor of Maracaibo.

"The only thing missing is for them to investigate me for the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy," Rosales told reporters.

The state prosecutor's office said the charges of "illicit enrichment," punishable by three to 10 years in prison, were based on a government investigation of Rosales' assets in which he was unable to explain the origin of certain funds.

Chavez is seeking a referendum for early next year on changing the constitution to lift a two-term limit on presidential re-election. **REUTERS**

News in brief

WASHINGTON Senate negotiators failed on Thursday night to reach a compromise deal to bail out U.S. automakers, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said, adding "There is too much difference" between negotiators to reach a deal. Reid said the chamber would attempt to proceed with a Democratic-sponsored plan, but predicted it would not pass. "It's over with," the Nevada Democrat said.

CARACAS A power outage struck parts of the Venezuelan capital yesterday, the latest in a series of major blackouts. The outage hit during rush hour in the metropolitan area of about 5 million people. Experts say Venezuela has skimped on billions of dollars in electrical investments, leaving power generation 20 per cent below the level needed for a stable grid.

RUSSIA Alexey Belyayev-Gintovt won the main Kandinsky art prize, worth 40,000 euros, yesterday for his "Motherland-Daughter" paintings. The works' politically critical nature prompted some gala hecklers to label him a "fascist." **REUTERS**

Brazil unveils $3.6 billion in tax breaks

BRASILIA Brazil's government announced yesterday tax breaks worth 8.4 billion reais ($3.6 billion US) designed to boost demand and stem a slowing economy, but which could undermine its fiscal strength.

The government will cut industrial taxes on cars and reduce taxes on consumer loans to help an ailing automobile industry and bolster consumer demand, authorities said.

It will cut income taxes by as much as 54 per cent on lower and middle salary brackets.

Also, the central bank will use international reserves to extend loans to Brazilian companies with foreign debt maturing in 2009. Total loans could exceed $10 billion.

The measure is designed to ease a liquidity crunch on the currency market, which has made it difficult for companies to service their overseas loans.

Critics said the measures could signal a deterioration of the government's fiscal position. **REUTERS**

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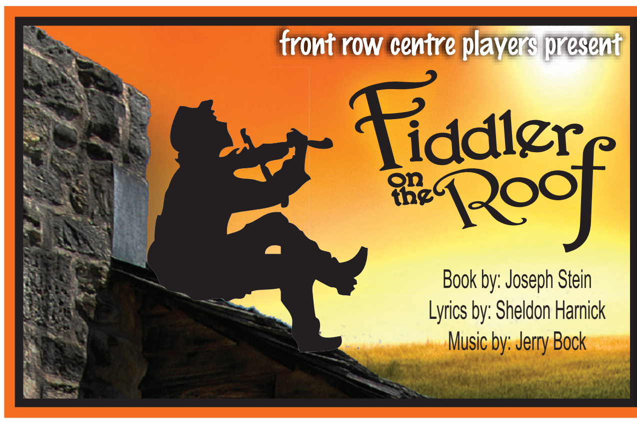

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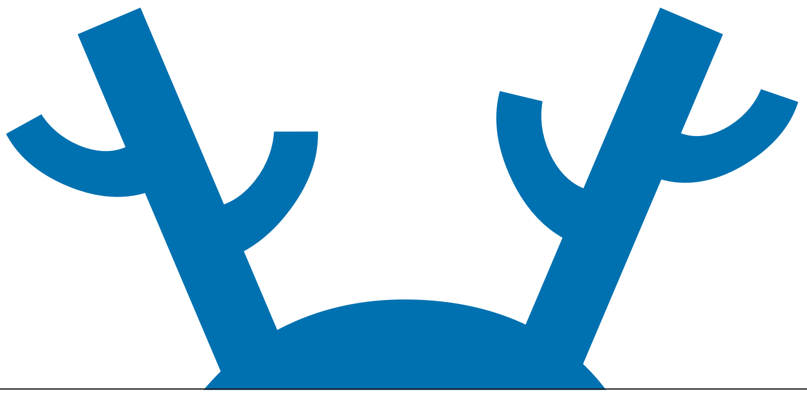

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Critics in the crowd
Russia's top modern art award has gone to Alexey Belyayev-Gintovt but the artist was promptly heckled and accused of fascism. **REUTERS**

EU closer to recession, climate deal

European leaders moved towards agreement on a multi-billion dollar program to tackle economic recession and a climate change plan amended to limit impact on struggling industries.

Green groups warned that the European Union's credibility as a force in tackling climate change would be endangered if it accepted too many changes to a plan to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2020.

One British group said compromises in EU climate policy, which will be key to world talks next year to produce a successor to the Kyoto pact on climate change, amounted to a 'meltdown.'

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who has threatened to veto a deal without concessions to protect key industries, emerged from the first day of a two-day EU summit, declaring: "We are heading towards a compromise."

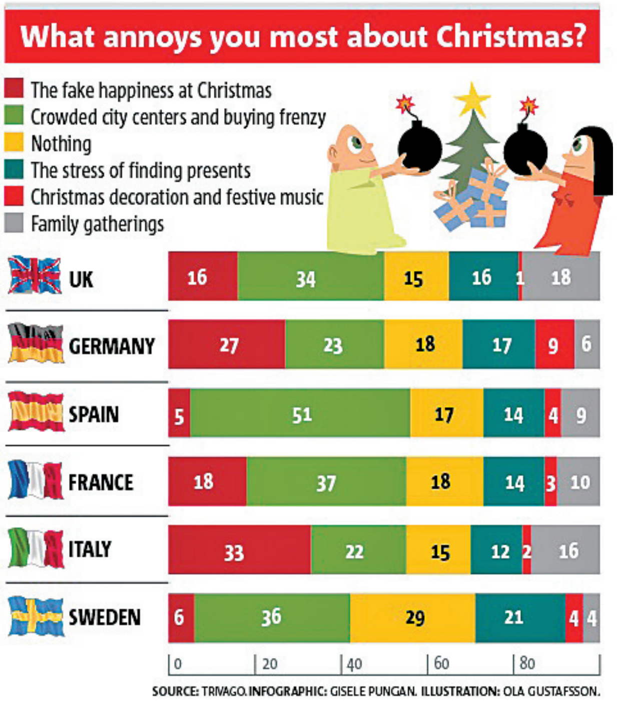
Poland, which had demanded concessions on its heavily polluting coal-based power industry, also registered agreement.

Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker warned against dilution of climate measures in the drive to revive commerce.

"The economic crisis will pass, the climate crisis will stay. We have to do something," he told reporters.

Steel, cement, chemicals, paper and other industries will be sheltered from the added cost of buying permits to emit carbon dioxide. **REUTERS**

What annoys you most about Christmas?



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News in brief

GAMBLER An Australian gambler who lost millions in a $1.4 billion US gaming spree is suing one of the country's largest casinos, the Crown Casino in Melbourne, claiming he was targeted by managers despite a known gambling addiction. **REUTERS**

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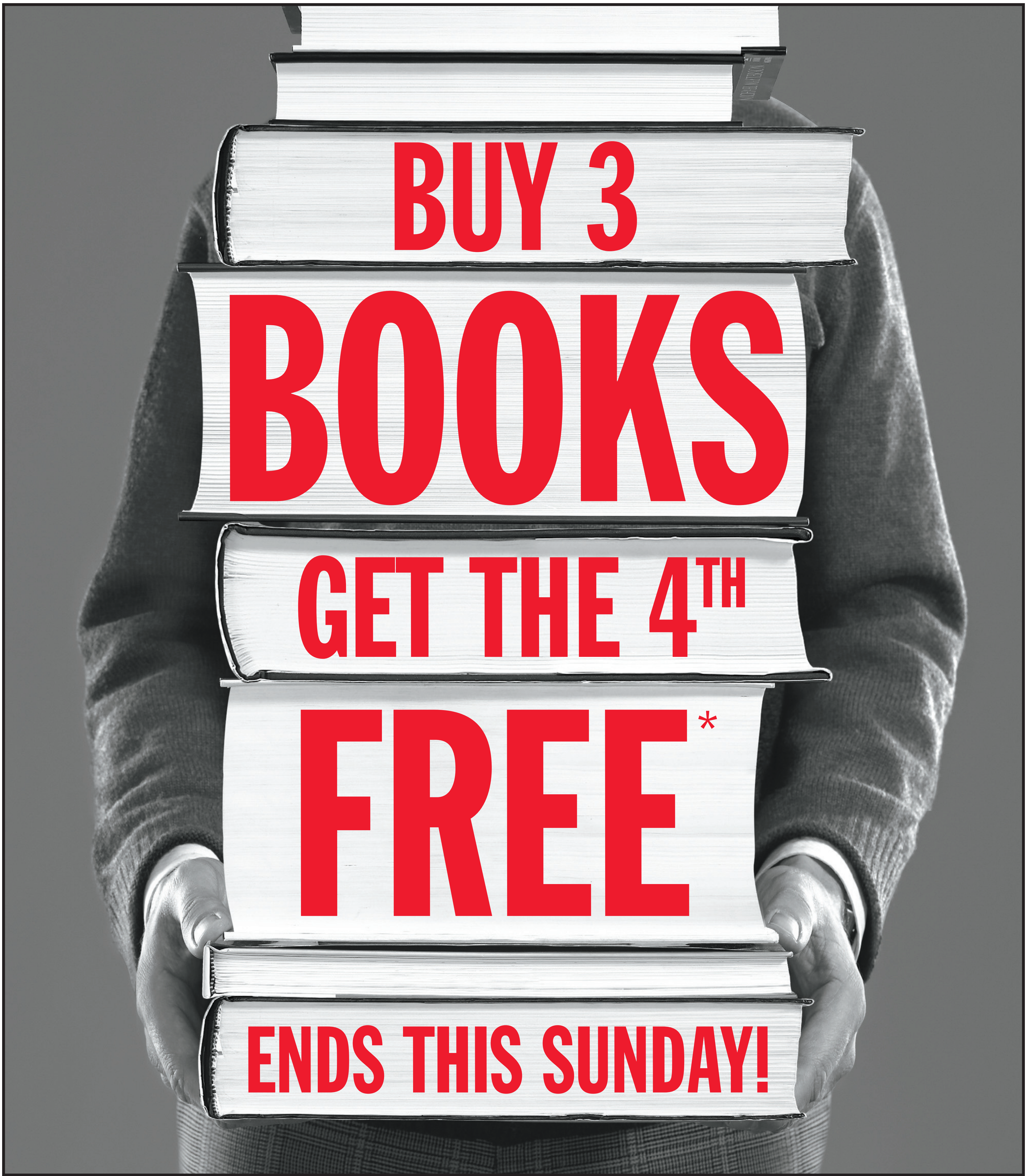

Chapters Indigo

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Murder suspect channels Hamlet

U.S. exchange student Amanda Knox, 21, perhaps the best-known murder suspect in Italy, is featured in a prison movie reciting the "To be, or not to be" speech from Shakespeare's Hamlet. Knox, 21, is being held over the murder of her British roommate. **REUTERS**

Wall Street exec charged with fraud

FINANCE Bernard Madoff, a Wall Street trader who founded Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities LLC, was arrested and charged yesterday with allegedly running a multi-billion dollar Ponzi scheme, U.S. authorities said.

Federal prosecutors accused Madoff, 70, a former chairman of the Nasdaq Stock Market, of running a Ponzi scheme, which is a pyramid-type swindle in which very high returns are promised to early investors, who are paid off with money put up by later investors.

Madoff's attorney did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment. **REUTERS**

More clashes in Athens on day 6 of Greek violence

Protesters in Athens yesterday hurled fire bombs at riot police and were answered with tear gas, as 4,000 Greek students marched in a sixth straight day of anti-government violence.

Riots across Greece, triggered by the police shooting of a teenager but fuelled by deep popular anger over corruption and economic hardship, have shaken the conservative government.

"Down with the government of murderers," read demonstrators' banners. Marchers chanted "Cops, Pigs, Murderers" in the latest spasm of Greece's worst unrest since the aftermath of its 1967-1974 military rule.

The violence was less intense then in previous days, but more protests are planned and some asked how much longer the government could remain in power. "The government has shown it cannot handle this. If police start imposing the law, everyone will say the military junta is back," said Yannis Kalaitzakis, 49, an electrician.

"The government is stuck between a rock and a hard place." **REUTERS**

> **"The government has shown it cannot handle this."**
> Yannis Kalaitzakis

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Comment & Views

Comment

Tiring of the spectacle?

OmniVision

Rick McGinnis

rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

We can only imagine what was said to Bob Rae in the 24-hour period between last Monday and Tuesday to convince him to concede the fight for leader of the Liberal Party of Canada to his old college roommate Michael Ignatieff. Whatever it was, it must have been a compelling enough argument — or attractive enough offer — to breach Rae's apparently adamant opposition and forthright ego.

When the week began, Rae was insisting that "most people believe it's better to have a contest, it's better to have a choice." A day later, he was all resignation and curt practicality: "It's not the end of the world here, folks," he told the Toronto Star. "I mean, a decision had to be made."

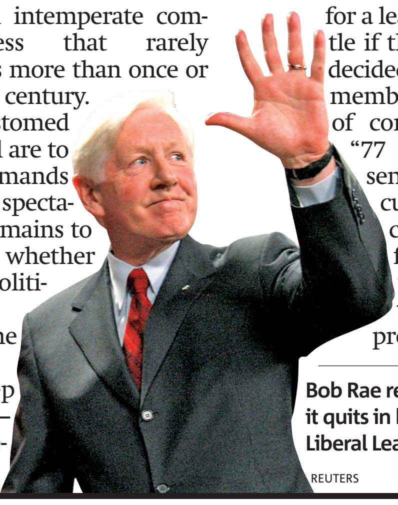
"You have to be realistic about these things," he said, with the verbal equivalent of a wince. "It's just politics."

Politics is what we're seeing a lot of this season, as the howling rhetoric and convulsions of two election campaigns on either side of the border seems to have infused the customary torpor of Canadian Parliament with an intemperate combativeness that rarely emerges more than once or twice a century. Unaccustomed as we all are to the demands of this spectacle, it remains to be seen whether our politicians have the stamina to keep going — or whether the Canadian people have the patience to pay attention.

Call it what you want — and I like to call it a coup within an attempted coup — but it's hard to deny that the surprisingly brisk leadership shuffle the Liberals have undertaken this week is an acknowledgement that their assault on Stephen Harper's minority government might not be powered by fully charged batteries. Even after stepping aside for Ignatieff, Rae insisted that he would still have been up for a leadership battle if the party had decided to go to its members, instead of consulting the "77 MPs and 58 senators of caucus, defeated candidates from the October election and the presidents of riding associations and commission clubs" the Star called the "Liberal elite."

Consulting the party's own bylaws, choosing alternative delegates from electoral district associations requires a candidate "(i) is a youth, if there are not six youth delegates from that EDA; (ii) is an aboriginal person, if there are not two aboriginal delegates from that EDA; (iii) is a woman, if there are not 10 delegates from that EDA who are women; (iv) is a man, if there are not ten delegates from that EDA who are men; (v) is a senior, if there are not two delegates from that EDA who are seniors." You almost can't blame them for defaulting to the backroom everyone thinks runs the Liberal party.

Rae's right; whatever this is — and it's certainly nothing like democracy, perish the thought — it's just politics, God help us all.



Bob Rae recently called it quits in his bid for the Liberal Leadership.

REUTERS

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

Views

Fix community arenas before they collapse

UrbanCompass

Janice Paskey

Things are going to get interesting, with $40 million in sport funding now up for grabs. City council will vote next week on how to disperse what's left from a billion-dollar grant from the province. Each city quadrant will get $10 million.

Hockey rinks are a priority, and our mayor and council already committed $43.5 million for new rinks at the Canada Olympic Park, South Fish Creek Park, and the Family Leisure Centre.

For many community associations, this felt like being ditched for the trophy wife. Even in rinkland, there are clear haves (those just mentioned) and have-nots. The have-nots are the community association rinks, just like wife No. 1, they are aging but have stuck with you through thick and thin.

Next week, council will review suggested guidelines that give communities only 35 per cent of funds for capital projects, for projects of a minimum of $715,000. This places volunteer-run community associations in the tough position of piecing together matching grants, or fundraising for repairs.

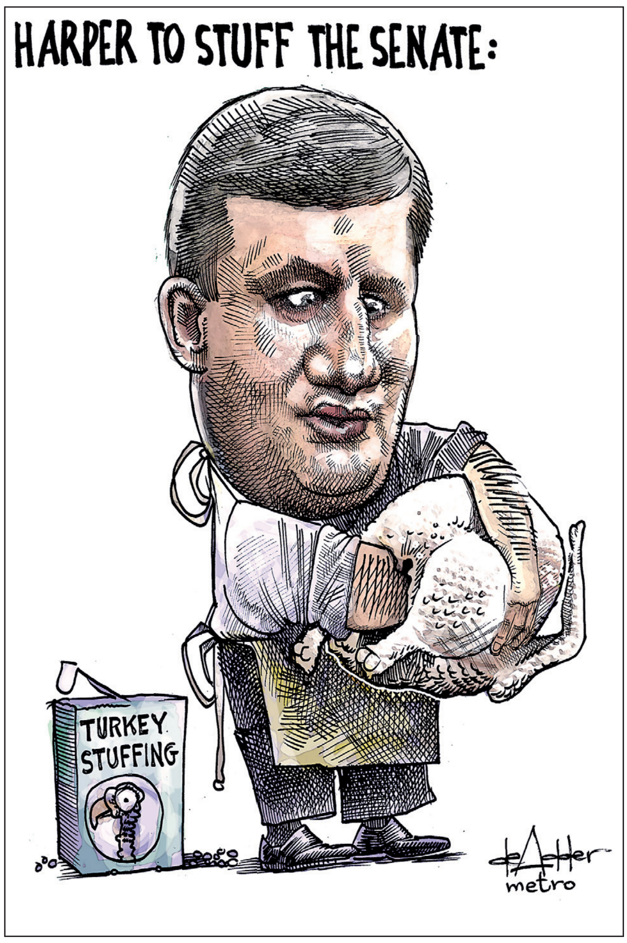
It won't be easy. Last year the city tallied up the costs of maintaining 13 arenas run by community associations. The way things work is the city owns the buildings, and leases them to communities, which are struggling to maintain these aging structures without any regular city financing. Most make do on a combo of ice fees, provincial and city grants, and getting volunteers out to casinos. But when Bowness went bankrupt and handed back its keys to the city, the ill-maintained rink collapsed, hockey programs ran ashore, and the city was forced to pay. Fairview had similar issues. The city directed its staff to work with all communities to figure out a way to ensure repairs get made.

The picture isn't pretty. Of 11 of 13 rinks studied, most are older than 24 years (the oldest is Triwood, 1962, and most modern is Don Hartman, 1995). The city estimated $2.6 million is needed for immediate refrigeration plant repairs, $3.1 million in the next one to three years, and $15 million over the next decade.

Rinks are a city priority along with indoor gyms, indoor fields, ice arenas, tracks, multipurpose rooms, then outdoor baseball fields, and tracks. (Racquet sports are at the bottom of the heap along with dive tanks).

Shouldering multimillion-dollar arena repairs and orchestrating complicated grant bids is simply too much to ask of volunteer-run community groups. City council should remove the matching grant requirement and fix what needs to be fixed before the volunteer-run arenas collapse from fatigue as their new city-financed arena counterparts cast a haughty shadow.

Janice Paskey teaches journalism at Mount Royal College, serves on her community association board and is proud mom to two boys.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Letters

Coalitions nothing new nor undemocratic

I am quite appalled by the cries against the opposition parties' plan to form a coalition government as undemocratic.

We do not vote for a leader we vote for MPs. In a majority the party with the majority of MPs voted in gets to run the country. However, in a minority the party with the most MPs elected gets first shot at proving to the rest of the House of Commons that they are best suited to lead the country. If the minority government fails and receives a non-confidence vote, the opposition gets a chance. This is nothing new, as countries around the world have governments formed by a coalition of the opposition parties.

TYSON OATWAY, EDMONTON

If you don't like her, move

RE: "Let's retire the queen" (Dec 10)

Perhaps Mr. Sullivan should just move south to the United States, and ignore hundreds of years of shared history, and a place in the Commonwealth of Nations, if he finds the Queen to be such a thorn in his side.

TOM POKORNY, TORONTO

Measure twice, cut once

RE: "Let's retire the queen" (Dec 10)

Why it's bad to have one more step before a final decision? "Measure twice, cut once" as say Canadians. What a mess we would have with this fast-made coalition if not for the intervention of the GG. Now we have a reasonable cooling period for Harper to think twice how to behave in a minority, and for the opposition to choose the new stronger leader.

BORIS FOURSENKO,
RICHMOND HILL, ONT

A hunger for politics

I am sure many did not know there was a word called "prorogue" until the recently prorogued Parliament. While discussing the word, somebody said it sounds like "pierogi/perogie." That was that, we prorogued our session and went for a perogie break.

ANANT NAGPUR, OTTAWA

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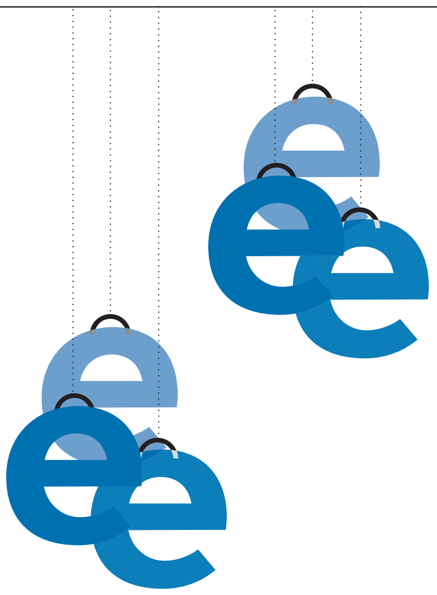

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You can't buy irony

Visa Inc. chief executive Joseph Saunders was without his own plastic when he lost his wallet en route to a New York conference from San Francisco yesterday. "It's rather embarrassing when someone steals my credit cards," he said. **REUTERS**

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Business in brief

RETAIL Lululemon Athletica Co. and Empire Co. both showed double-digit profit growth in their quarterly reports yesterday, but while the markets warmed to Empire, owner of Sobey's grocery stores, because it sells essential food products, reaction to the trendy clothier was much cooler because it might not survive lower consumer spending.

PAY Wall Street's bonuses will fall at least 50 per cent this year, New York's comptroller said, noting that the pay scale for all workers is not immune to economic forces. **REUTERS**

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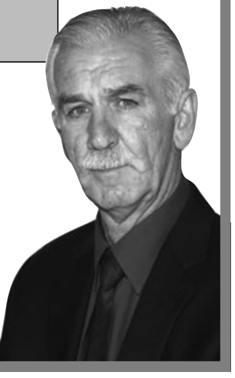

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Oil firms to spend cautiously in 2009

EnCana Corp. and Petro-Canada moved to cut 2009 capital spending yesterday to cope with falling commodity prices and market turmoil, but they left themselves enough room to change plans quickly in case the economy improves, or worsens.

"The business environment is too volatile to count on with any degree of certainty," Petro-Canada chief executive Ron Brenneman said on a conference call. Brenneman said his company "will stay as flexible as possible until the situation becomes a little clearer for both the commodity and financial markets."

Petro-Canada said it will cut its 2009 capital budget by 36 per cent, to $3.96 billion, from the $6.16 billion it plans to spend this year.

The company is forecasting a drop in output as it plans major maintenance shutdowns at offshore projects in Atlantic Canada and in the North Sea.

EnCana said 2009 capital spending may shift up or down by $500 million depending on whether the North American recession tightens or eases over the course of the year.

It said it sees 2009 production levels remaining similar to 2008's, in the range of about 4.5 billion to 4.7 billion cubic feet of natural gas equivalent a day.

It also lowered its 2008 target for cash flow by about 5 per cent, to a range between $9.4 billion and $9.6 billion. **REUTERS**

BCE, buyers say $34.8B deal is dead

BUYOUT The $34.8 billion leveraged buyout of BCE Inc. ended in collapse yesterday, setting the stage for a fight between the company and its buyers over the deal's $1.2 billion breakup fee.

The derailment was widely expected after BCE's accountants, KPMG, had concluded that the company would be insolvency due to its debt load.

BCE confirmed the buyout would not proceed and said it would demand a breakup fee from the buyers, because they prematurely delivered their notice to terminate.

The buyers, meanwhile, said it was "very clear" that neither party owes a termination fee to the other. **REUTERS**

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Junior selection camp opens

Thirty-eight players arrived in Ottawa yesterday for Canada's world junior hockey selection camp. A morning skate and an evening intrasquad game are scheduled for today and tomorrow, but just an intrasquad game is on Sunday's agenda. The 22-player team will be named Monday. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

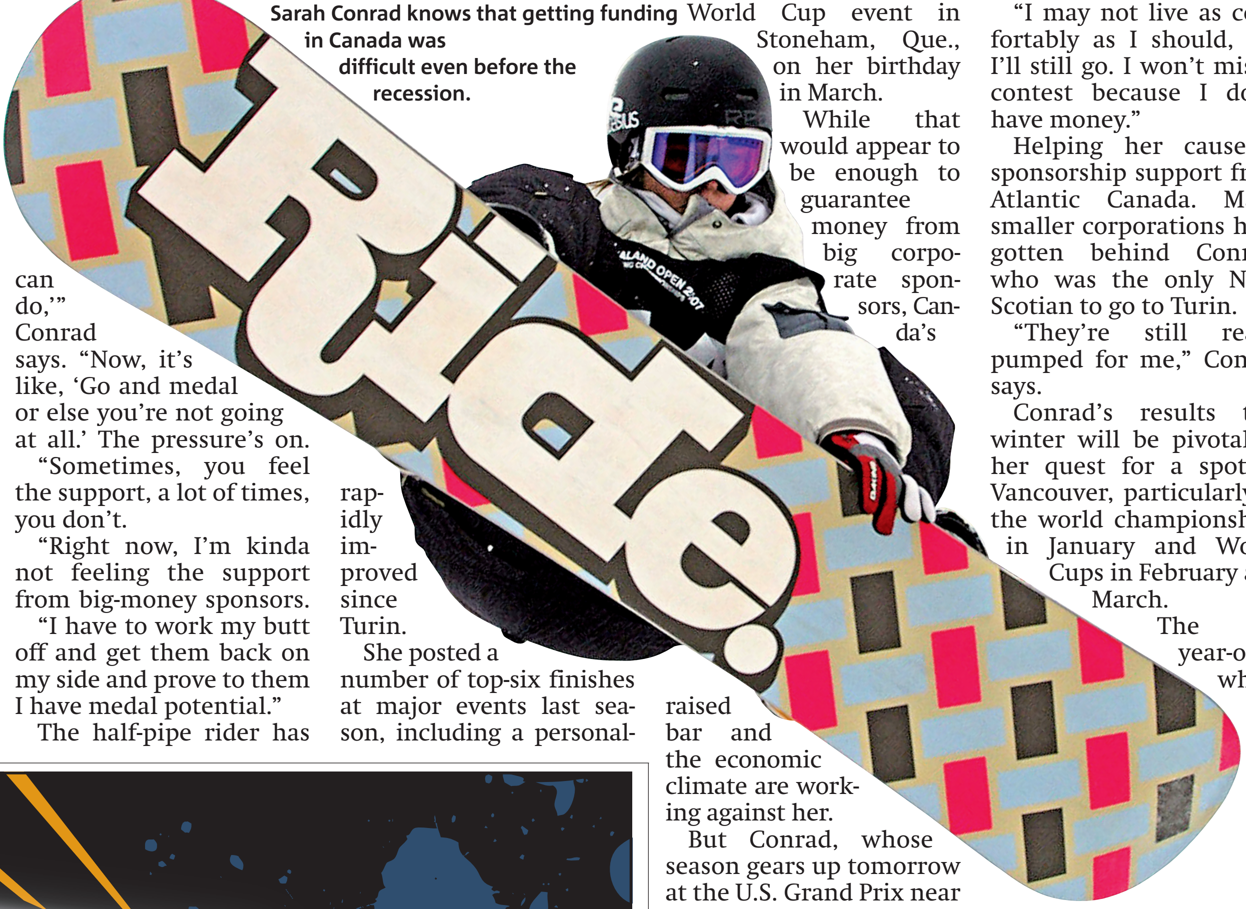
Buble buys into WHL's Giants

B.C.-born singer Michael Buble was named a minority owner of the Vancouver Giants yesterday, joining fellow co-owners Sultan Thiara, former NHL coach Pat Quinn and NHL legend Gordie Howe in the Giants' ownership lineup. The 33-year old crooner has sold more than 15 million records since his major-label debut nearly six years ago. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Conrad fights for national funding, spot in 2010

VANCOUVER
2010 **Games**

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca



As she tries to make the cut for Vancouver, Sarah Conrad knows that getting funding in Canada was difficult even before the recession.

Sarah Conrad isn't sure where her national sponsor money went, but she's ready to fight to get it back.

The Dartmouth, N.S., snowboarder, who unexpectedly went to the Winter Olympics in Turin in 2006, is encountering a few bumps in the road on her way to Vancouver 2010.

Turns out the Canadian Olympic Committee's Own The Podium slogan could leave Conrad out in the cold.

"Turin was kind of like, 'Yeah, sweet, you qualified, go and see how you can do,'" Conrad says. "Now, it's like, 'Go and medal or else you're not going at all.' The pressure's on.

"Sometimes, you feel the support, a lot of times, you don't.

"Right now, I'm kinda not feeling the support from big-money sponsors.

"I have to work my butt off and get them back on my side and prove to them I have medal potential."

The half-pipe rider has rapidly improved since Turin.

She posted a number of top-six finishes at major events last season, including a personal-best silver medal at a World Cup event in Stoneham, Que., on her birthday in March.

While that would appear to be enough to guarantee money from big corporate sponsors, Canada's raised bar and the economic climate are working against her.

But Conrad, whose season gears up tomorrow at the U.S. Grand Prix near Denver, says the downturn won't prevent her from travelling to important events.

"Money's money, if there's a will, there's a way," she says.

"I may not live as comfortably as I should, but I'll still go. I won't miss a contest because I don't have money."

Helping her cause is sponsorship support from Atlantic Canada. Many smaller corporations have gotten behind Conrad, who was the only Nova Scotian to go to Turin.

"They're still really pumped for me," Conrad says.

Conrad's results this winter will be pivotal in her quest for a spot in Vancouver, particularly at the world championships in January and World Cups in February and March.

The 23-year-old, who lives in Squamish, B.C., for much of the year, says she can already feel "Olympic fever" building for 2010, and doesn't want to be left out.

She hopes consistent top-six finishes will get her there.

"I feel good about my riding; I feel strong," she says.

"The next year is going to be a trip, but this is what we do. This is our job. I'm going to do my best and see how things end up."

> **"Sometimes, you feel the support, a lot of times, you don't. Right now, I'm kinda not feeling the support from big-money sponsors. I have to work my butt off and get them back on my side and prove to them I have medal potential."**
> Sarah Conrad

On the web

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NHL Lightning stun Habs

REUTERS/SHAUN BEST

Vincent Lecavalier celebrates his goal with Mark Recchi, left, last night. The Tampa Bay Lightning seemed to put aside the distractions swirling around their team, beating Montreal 3-1.

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Legace on the shelf
St. Louis Blues goaltender Manny Legace is listed as day-to-day after getting kneed in the head. Legace was hurt in the first period of Wednesday's 4-2 loss against Anaheim. He gave up one goal on 11 shots before leaving. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Sports in brief

MLB The New York Mets acquired relief pitcher J.J. Putz from the Seattle Mariners in a three-team trade that also involved the Cleveland Indians. The deal came only hours after the Mets officially signed former Angels reliever Francisco Rodriguez, who set a major league record with 62 saves in 2008. It is believed that Putz will serve as the setup man in a bullpen that will feature an entirely new look in 2009.

NHL The Dallas Stars announced yesterday that they have placed veteran defenceman Sergei Zubov on injured reserve, retroactive to Nov. 28, with a hip injury.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Seeing what develops

TheHockeyNews

Brian Costello

thehockeynews.com

The Calgary Flames haven't been particularly strong lately at the development part of the drafting process, but maybe they're starting to turn the corner.

Flames GM Darryl Sutter did a terrific off-season job of beefing up the third and fourth lines and that has had a trickle-down effect on the homegrown prospects.

The unheralded signings of Curtis Glencross and Rene Bourque have turned out well. Bourque is solid on the second line and a capable replacement on the first line when called upon. Glencross has been brilliant on the third line, providing excellent checking with his speed and a surprising scoring touch.

It has almost been through osmosis then that prospects drafted by the Flames have flourished this season. Dustin Boyd and Dave Moss have already bettered their stats from all of last season and look to be second-line producers.

Eric Nystrom doesn't get a lot of ice time on the fourth line, but considering he was flirting with first-round flop territory a year ago, he has come a long way.

Winger Brandon Prust has shown he can eat some minutes and do some scraping on the fourth line, and Adam Pardy has endeared himself to the team as a sixth or seventh defenceman now and perhaps much more down the road.

How's that for development?

For a franchise that drafted extremely poorly between 1997 and 2002 — the best of the bunch from 63 draft picks being Chuck Kobasew, Travis Moen, Matthew Lombardi (and now Dave Moss) — the Flames are showing impressive inner-growth.

Is it the drafting, then, or the developing that's improving?

Dion Phaneuf was going to make it regardless of which organization developed him. There's no other yield from 2003. Boyd, Prust, Pardy and maybe Kris Chucko are the proceeds from 2004.

Unfortunately, the 2005 and 2006 draft may not yield a lot in terms of NHL talent, and it's far too early to say how Flames picks in 2007 and 2008 will turn out. (Watch for the Hockey News Future Watch issue in February for the consensus opinion on Calgary prospects.)

Development, more than ever in today's salary-capped NHL, is paramount for a team's ability to stay strong from within.

Dustin Boyd has evolved as a homegrown player.

The Hockey News
thn.com

Colangelo considers trade options

Bryan Colangelo is resisting change for the sake of change, but there may be Raptor roster movement sooner rather than later.

Seeing a need for another big man with Kris Humphries injured and rookie Nathan Jawai still not even practising, the Toronto Raptor general manager could have a new player on the team as early as next week. And the acquisition won't necessarily come via a trade. It could be as simple as signing an unemployed free agent or minor leaguer to a contract for the rest of the season.

There are a handful of players who might warrant consideration as Colangelo looks around for some frontcourt help. There are ex-NBAers like Juwan Howard, Jake Voskuhl and even Michael Ruffin who might fit what Colangelo needs.

Colangelo has said he thinks the need for a fourth big man is, at the moment, acute. Humphries has missed four games already and is not expected to play tonight in New Jersey, and Jawai's heart issues have kept him off the court all season.

> **"When they smell blood in the water, they come at you."**
> Bryan Colangelo

And while the move of Andrea Bargnani back to the bench in a backup role to Chris Bosh and Jermaine O'Neal will exacerbate the problem a bit, if coach Jay Triano is serious about cutting Bosh's minutes, the need for a fourth big man is dire. Colangelo said he's not ready to pull the trigger on any hugely significant deal because he still believes the roster as constructed could be among the best in the second tier of the Eastern Conference behind clear front-runners Boston and Cleveland.

That's not to say he hasn't been fielding all kinds of offers of late. With the Raptors scuffling along, rival general managers are burning up the phone lines and acting like sharks circling their prey.

"It is natural from my perspective, but other teams, when they smell blood in the water, they come at you," he said.

And that's not necessarily a bad thing from Colangelo's point of view. He isn't about to do anything with what he sees as his core group of Bosh, Jose Calderon, Bargnani and O'Neal, but the urgency other GMs have may open avenues previously closed.

"It stimulates the process (of finding a mutually-beneficial trade)," he said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Stern regrets Grizzlies failure

NBA The failed expansion into Vancouver is still a disappointment, NBA commissioner David Stern said yesterday.

During an interview with Bill Simmons on espn.com, Stern said that he wished the NBA "hadn't had the Vancouver experience."

"Great city and we disappointed them," he said. "And we disappointed ourselves."

The Vancouver Grizzlies joined the NBA as an expansion team in 1995 along with the Toronto Raptors.

Stern added he doesn't think the NBA is likely to return to Vancouver. "We just didn't take advantage of the opportunity," Stern said.

"Maybe we shouldn't have done it there, maybe we should've only expanded into Toronto."

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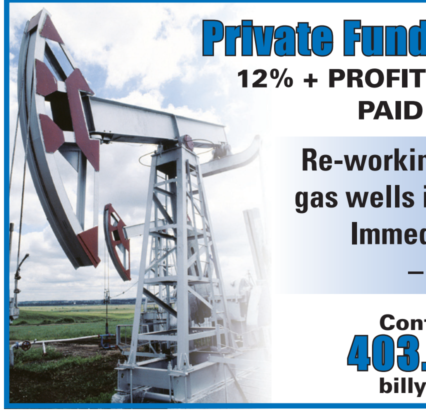

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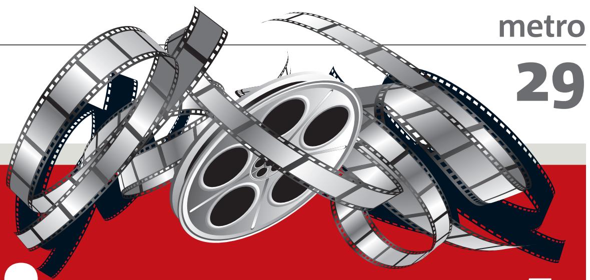


Movies&Entertainment

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

Movies

Just golden

Pg 30

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett), Frost/Nixon and Doubt led the Golden Globe nominations with five nods each. All the buzz around The Dark Knight fell flat, as the blockbuster only picked up one nomination.

movies

Pg 30

Sean Penn delivers an utterly truthful performance in Milk.

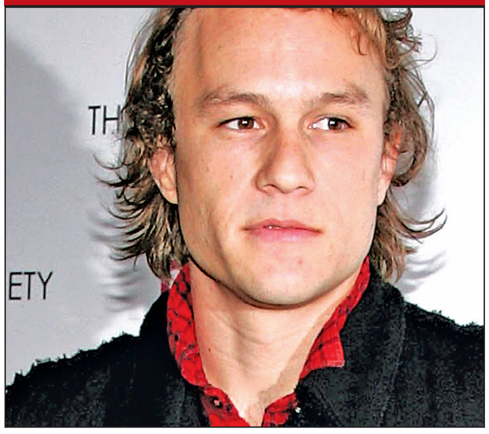
music

Pg 34

So what's on Alan Cross' Christmas music playlist?

7th heaven

Pg 37



Heath Ledger picking up award nominations.

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Tokyo Mater to play ahead of Bolt
Disney-Pixar will premiere its 3-D short film Tokyo Mater at theaters nationwide before its animated movie Bolt. The short is the fourth in Disney-Pixa's Cars Toons series, inspired by the hit 2006 film Cars. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Movies

⊕⊕⊕⊕⊕ A CLASSIC; ⊕⊕⊕⊕ EXCELLENT; ⊕⊕⊕ GOOD; ⊕⊕ FAIR; ⊕ POOR

Milk a good source of film

Milk
Director: Gus Van Sant
Stars: Sean Penn, Josh Brolin
Classification: 14A
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕½

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

Gus Van Sant's Milk is a project the director has been nurturing for years.

The movie is about Harvey Milk, the first openly gay politician elected in the U.S. who was tragically murdered by his colleague Dan White.

Sean Penn stars as Milk and delivers the kind of emotionally draining and utterly truthful performance that is expected of him.

The same can be said of Josh Brolin, who gives the potentially one-dimensional Dan White a thoroughly believable and complex psychological profile — which shouldn't be particularly surprising given that he just did the same thing with the far more challenging role of George W. Bush.

GoldenGlobes

BEST ACTOR NOD: Sean Penn

While Penn and Brolin are the major standouts, everyone else in the cast — including James Franco, Emile Hirsch and Alison Pill — seem to understand the socio-cultural importance of the film and deliver excellent performances.

Released mere weeks after the now infamous Prop 8 campaign in California, this film about arguably the greatest gay rights activist could not be more timely.

It's obviously a very personal issue for Van Sant, who treats the film with the kind of gravitas it deserves and avoids his typical stylistic flights of fancy unless they serve the film in a meaningful way.

Milk might not test the boundaries of narrative filmmaking like the rest of Van Sant's recent work, but it is still an important story told with style and heart that deserves to be seen.

And the nominees are ...

Benjamin Button and Frost/Nixon lead the Golden Globes pack

A variety of films from heart-rending Slumdog Millionaire to tension-filled Frost/Nixon shared the spotlight of Golden Globe nominations yesterday as Hollywood marched toward the Oscars.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, about a man who ages backward, and Frost/Nixon, which recounts the interviews of disgraced U.S. President Richard Nixon by British journalist David Frost, each earned five nominations including best film drama to lead the nominees.

"It's a really good morning," Frost/Nixon director Ron Howard told Reuters. "We need this kind of acknowledgment to cut through the clutter" of numerous holiday films.

Benjamin Button and "Frost/Nixon were joined in the race for best movie drama by Slumdog Millionaire, about a poor Indian man competing for love and money on a TV game show, and relationship sagas Revolutionary Road and The Reader.

Doubt, a tale of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, tied Benjamin Button and Frost/Nixon with five nominations, but was shut out of the race for best film drama.

Also excluded from best film races were Milk, with Sean Penn playing slain gay rights activist Harvey Milk, and Batman flick The Dark Knight. Milk did, however, earn a nomination for Penn as best actor and Dark Knight provided a nomination for the late Heath Ledger in the supporting actor category.

Golden Globe Awards are also are handed out for best film musical or comedy and that group of nominees included Burn After Reading, Happy-Go-Lucky, In Bruges, Mamma Mia! and director Woody Allen's Vicky Cristina Barcelona.

The Golden Globes are voted on by roughly 90 members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and given out on Jan. 11.

REUTERS

GoldenGlobes

THE NOMINEES: For a complete list of Golden Globe nominees, vist metronews.ca/entertainment.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, starring Brad Pitt, received five Golden Globe nominations yesterday.

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Atlantis Rising being adapted
Writer-director Joby Harold is negotiating to write the adaptation of the comic book Atlantis Rising for DreamWorks. Len Wiseman (Live Free or Die Hard) is attached to direct the apocalyptic science fiction project. REUTERS

Reel Time

⊕⊕⊕⊕⊕ A CLASSIC; ⊕⊕⊕⊕ EXCELLENT; ⊕⊕⊕ GOOD; ⊕⊕ FAIR; ⊕ POOR

As the world doesn't turn

The Day the Earth Stood Still

Director: Scott Derrickson
Stars: Keanu Reeves, Jennifer Connelly
Classification: PG
Rating: ⊕⊕

TALIA SOGHOMONIAN
Metro World News

Back in 1951, the thought of aliens invading the Earth was flippant. The world was still recovering from the Second World War, the Cold War had set in and extraterrestrials were the new Germans.

Robert Wise's now-classic movie The Day the Earth Stood Still carried a timely anti-nuclear message, attempting to stretch the reigning fears of the time; the Cold War was setting in and the Korean War was just around the corner.

Almost 60 years later, in Scott Derrickson's remake, the global situation has changed, this time with an ecological message, the latest point of inspiration for screenwriters being global warming. From the latest Bond flick Quantum of Solace to The Transporter3, raising awareness of the "unconventional truth" has been like a light bulb of a bright new idea.

But while Wise's original was an unconventional exercise, Derrickson's version seems clueless, reprising a "city under siege" story with in blockbuster format and some very bland characters.

Jennifer Connelly plays Helen, a microbiologist who is rounded up by the government one night, along with some fellow eggheads, when a giant space object seems headed straight to Earth. Instead, it lands in Central Park and it turns out to be a glowing giant marble.

Out of it steps out a human-shaped alien who later morphs into Klaatu (Keanu Reeves), accompanied by an equally cold towering cold metal robot who seems lifted directly from Metropolis.

Keanu Reeves stars in the updated version of this sci-fi film.

On the web

- Visit *metronews.ca/movies* to see trailers for both Delgo and The Day the Earth Stood Still.

Klaatu is actually there to warn humanity that it's time to go, given that we're destroying the planet and the universe needs the planet to sustain life. But why warn us that they're going to destroy us?

The Day the Earth Stood Still is only about half the film it could have been. But its cowardly treatment of the political issue at its centre kills it. We don't expect every blockbuster to carry a serious message, but the movie had the potential of Independence Day and instead turns out to be just a one-time distraction.

Delgo better left in bargain bin

Delgo

Director: Marc F. Alder, Jason Maurer
Stars: Freddie Prinze Jr, Jennifer Love Hewitt
Classification: PG
Rating: ⊕

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

REVIEW Sometimes I wonder if the people who make family films hate children. Sure, there are plenty of children's movies that are wonderful, but for the most part they rank amongst the most boring, clichéd, unfunny movies ever spat onto the screen.

It's as if family filmmakers are convinced that their core audience is so young and stupid that they'll watch anything. Case in point: Delgo, an almost incomprehensible film that will be filling clearance bins very soon. This CGI-animated movie is about a mythical land ruled by flying people, reptilian people, goblins, and non-speaking monsters (they all have actual names, but they are difficult-to-remember nonsense words).

Because of a former evil queen, there is a long-brooding feud between the flying people and the reptilian people which leads to a war that can only be stopped by a plucky reptile boy and an impossibly perfect flying princess, who falls in love and help unite the fighting creatures. It's all pretty clichéd fantasy storytelling that could have been salvaged by clever writing, impressive animation, or entertaining celebrity voice casting, but sadly the film boasts none of the above.

Delgo was directed and co-written by Marc F. Alder and Jason Maurer. They had never made a film before and it shows. As with all CGI movies the cast is stacked with recognizable names, all of whom were wasted. Freddie Prinze Jr. and Jennifer Love Hewitt voice the lead characters, while the likes of Malcolm McDowell and Eric Idle phone in supporting roles.

Garbage like Delgo should be filling landfills where it belongs.

'Yes-we-can' message of film

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

FEATURE Bradley Cooper will never forget the night Barack Obama won the Presidency. He was in a hospital watching the elated event unfold on a battered television while shooting a movie appropriately enough called The Hangover.

Recently in Toronto to publicize his latest film, the former star of TV's Alias had been pondering the shifting winds of America.

"We've become more isolationist as a society but I think that's definitely changing. You can feel it, especially with the President-elect, there's a whole new energy (in America)," he said.

This new outlook couldn't be better signified than with the release of Jim Carrey's comedy Yes Man. A life-affirming tale about a slacker who's life has been stalled by complacency, Yes Man explores the journey he undergoes after agreeing to say "yes" to everything — whether it be guitar lessons, learning to speak Korean or to some brawler asking him if he wants a punch in the mouth.

"I didn't realize how much (the message of the film) was going to affect me," admits Cooper who plays Carrey's best friend in the movie. "When I read the script I just thought 'what a cool hook – this guy's got to say yes to everything'."

"(And) it's so relevant. We've been watching a guy (Obama) with the mantra 'Yes We Can' behind him for two years … its really interesting, the timing with everything."

The comedy may mark a turn in Jim Carrey's mindset as well. After attempting to show fans a more serious side in last year's box-office fumbler The Number 23, Yes Man brings Carrey back to the form that once made him Hollywood's most popular funnyman.

Jim Carrey stars in the new film, Yes Men

"The reason why I wanted to do it was Jim," said Cooper. "Watching him work in close proximity is kind of amazing. It's like watching one of the greatest comedians alive today for three months.

"I don't think I've worked with a guy that's that comedically gifted since Vince Vaughn (in Wedding Crashers)," Cooper said before stating that the two mentors have achieved success because "both of them have this uncanny ability to fail.

"They really are willing to make complete fools of themselves just to try. There's this abandon in their acting that gave me a lot of inspiration."

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"A TOTAL TRIUMPH!"
PETER TRAVERS
The New York Times
"THE BEST MAINSTREAM AMERICAN MOVIE I HAVE SEEN THIS YEAR."
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Ruffalo drops out of film project

Mark Ruffalo, who's brother died tragically this month, has dropped out of the indie drama Greenburg, according to the Hollywood Reporter. He will likely be replaced by Ben Stiller in the film. **PEOPLE.COM**

Academy Awards' no nunsense films

InFocus

Richard Crouse

mrchaos33@hotmail.com

If Meryl Streep earns an Academy Award for her performance as the formidable Sister Aloysius Beauvier, a nun who confronts a priest after suspecting him of abusing an African American student in Doubt, she will join a short but prestigious list of actresses who have won gold playing nuns.

The first to win an Oscar for portraying a sister was Jennifer Jones in 1943's The Song of Bernadette; next Susan Sarandon won for playing Sister Helen Prejean in Dead Man Walking.

Nuns have a long cinematic history and everyone from Ingrid Bergman to Mary Tyler Moore to Eric Idle has donned a habit for dramatic effect. Nuns have flown, sung and even been shipwrecked with Robert Mitchum on a Pacific Island, but my favorite big screen nun is Sister Assumpta in The Dangerous Lives of Alter Boys.

The title sounds ripped from the headlines, but is actually taken from a 1994 novel by Chris Fuhrman.

Set in the early 1970s, the film revolves around a group of teenage boys obsessed with comic books. Their ringleader, Tim, played by Kieran Culkin, is a prankster who schemes to get revenge on Sister Assumpta, a joyless strict nun with a prosthetic leg played by Jodie Foster.

Learning most of what they know of the world from the superhero adventures written by Stan Lee, they believe there are only two types of people — heroes and villains.

Sister Assumpta falls into the latter category and becomes the subject of a "blasphemous" comic book drawn by the boys featuring the evil motorcycle driving Nunzilla.

The guys imagine themselves as the heroes who do battle with Nunzilla's sisterly minions. Once the comic book is discovered the boys are expelled from school assured by Sister Assumpta that not only are they not welcome at school anymore, they likely won't be welcome in Heaven either.

Foster's Sister Assumpta spits hellfire in every sentence. She plays the sister as a strict disciplinarian who truly believes she is doing the best to save her students from damnation.

Her peg leg is just a physical manifestation of her rigid personality. It's something different for Foster who pulls it off with aplomb.

For more adventurous viewers there are nunsploitation movies. Sometimes called Convent Erotica, these movies are not for the easily offended and have titles like Killer Nun and Behind the Convent Walls. Watch them, but don't forget to say ten Hail Marys afterwards.

Richard Crouse is the author of Son of the 100 Best Movies You've Never Seen and film critic for CTV's Canada AM.

Messing minority in new film

Debra Messing sticks out like a sore thumb in her latest movie, Nothing Like the Holidays. But that is just fine by her.

Debra Messing stars in Nothing Like the Holidays.

In the comedy, which debuts in theaters today, a Puerto Rican family comes together at Christmas for the first time in three years, and Messing plays a very non-Latina career-driven executive wife of the family's eldest brother, played by John Leguizamo.

"I'd never been an outsider in a film," Messing said. "I very much felt like the white Jewish girl and it was the first time I had ever been the minority on the set."

Messing tried to "access my inner Latina" by recalling her elementary school Spanish during the shoot, she said.

The 40-year-old Messing said the film marks a step forward in Hollywood because it is essentially a mainstream holiday film but one that focuses on a minority, Latino family.

Nothing Like the Holidays follows the Rodriguez family during a holiday gathering in Chicago that is prompted by the

Movie feature

youngest brother's return from combat overseas.

An ensemble piece, the movie details the trials of each family member's career or personal relationships. Messing's character, Sarah, for instance, struggles with whether to take a new, high-powered job while facing pressure from her husband and mother-in-law to start a family.

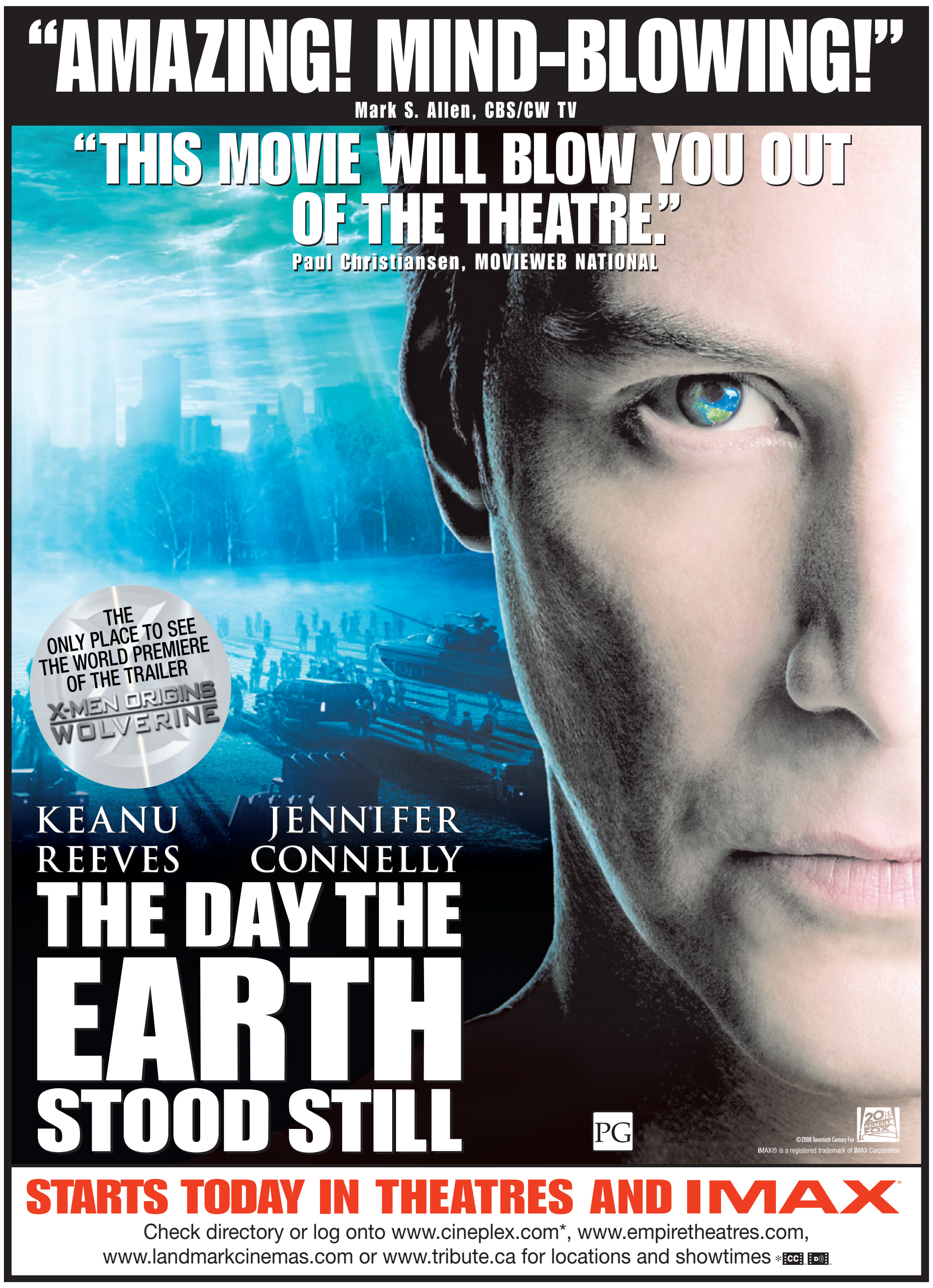
"That's not specific to the Puerto Rican culture," Messing said of the themes the movie pursues. "I could see an Italian family on screen, I could see a Jewish family on screen. You could just fill in the blank, because family is family."

Messing, who shot to stardom on eight seasons of the NBC sitcom Will & Grace, said she hoped Nothing Like the Holidays would help break down cultural barriers in Hollywood in much the same way Will & Grace brought gay characters to mainstream TV audiences in a hit prime-time show.

REUTERS

On the web

- To read a review of Nothing Like the Holidays, and to see a trailer of the film, visit metronews.ca/movies.



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This week's new releases are highlighted in red.

Screen Times

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., DEC. 12 TO THURS., DEC. 18. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

DISNEY ENTERPRISES

From left, Bolt, Mittens and Rhino in a scene from Bolt, which is currently in theatres.

CANYON MEADOWS
Bay 110 13226 Macleod Trail, 403-670-5444

Beverly Hills Chihuahua (G) Fri-Thu 1:15-4:05-7
Body of Lies (14A) Fri-Thu 12:55-4:05-6:50-9:30
City of Ember (PG) Fri-Thu 1:25-4-7:10
The Dark Knight (PG) Fri-Thu 1-4:15-8:15
The Duchess (14A) Fri-Thu 9:20
Eagle Eye (14A) Fri-Thu 1:20-4:20-6:50-9:35
Ghost Town (PG) Fri-Thu 1:05-3:40-7:25-9:50
Mamma Mia! (PG) Fri-Thu 1:30-4:10-7:20-9:50
Max Payne (14A) Fri-Thu 1:10-3:55-7:05-9:30
Quarantine (18A) Fri-Thu 9:35
RocknRolla (14A) Fri-Thu 9:40
The Secret Life of Bees (PG) Fri-Thu 1:10-4:10-7:15-9:40

CROWFOOT CROSSING
91 Crowfoot Terrace, 403-547-3316

Australia (PG) Fri-Thu 12-3:45-8
Bolt (G) Fri-Thu 12:10-2:45-5-7:25-9:55
The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 12:50-1:10-3:50-4:10-7-7:15-9:45-10:15
Delgo (PG) Fri-Thu 1-4-7:10
Four Christmases (PG) Fri-Thu 12:30-3-6:50-9:30
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Fri-Thu 12:20-2:50-5:10-7:35-9:50
Nutcracker/Casse-Noisette (STC) Sat 12
Punisher: War Zone (18A) Fri-Thu 1:50-4:50-7:50-10:25
Quantum of Solace (14A) Fri-Thu 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:10-10:30
Role Models (14A) Fri-Thu 1:40-4:20-7:20-10
Transporter 3 (14A) Fri 1:20-4:40-7:40-10:20 Sat 4:40-7:40-10:20 Sun-Thu 1:20-4:40-7:40-10:20
Twilight (PG) Fri-Thu 12:40-3:30-6:45-9:40

EAU CLAIRE MARKET
200 Barlay Parade, 403-263-3166

Australia (PG) Fri 7:30 Sat-Sun 12-4-8 Mon-Thu 7:30
The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Fri 7-10 No Passes Sat-Sun 12:10-3:10-7-10 No Passes Mon-Thu 7-10
Four Christmases (PG) Fri 7:10-9:45 Sat-Sun 12:35-3:35-7:10-9:45 Mon-Thu 7:10-9:45
Quantum of Solace (14A) Fri 6:50-9:50 Sat-Sun 12:30-3:30-6:50-9:50 Mon-Thu 6:50-9:50
Rachel Getting Married (STC) Fri 6:30-9:30 Sat-Sun 12:15-3-6:30-9:30 Mon-Thu 6:30-9:30
Twilight (PG) Fri 6:40-9:40 Sat-Sun 12:20-3:20-6:40-9:40 Mon-Wed 6:40-9:40 Thu 9:40

EMPIRE STUDIO 16 COUNTRY HILLS
388 Country Hills Blvd., 403-686-8491

Australia (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:50-4:30-8
Bolt (G) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:10-2:25
Bolt in Disney Digital 3D (G) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:35-2:55-7-9:20
The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes, SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:30-1-3-3:30-7-7:30-9:30-10
Delgo (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:20-2:35
Four Christmases (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:45-1:15-3:10-3:40-6:50-7:20-9:15-9:45
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12-2:15-6:30-9:10
Nothing Like the Holidays (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:20-3:45-6:55-9:35
Punisher: War Zone (18A) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 2-4:30-7:40-10:10
Quantum of Solace (14A) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:15-12:45-2:50-3:20-6:45-7:15-9:20-9:50
Role Models (14A) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 7:35-9:55
Transporter 3 (14A) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:50-4:20-7:25-10:05
Twilight (PG) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 12:40-1:10-3:25-4-6:40-7:10-9:25-9:55 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sun 12:40-1:10-4-7:10-9:25-9:55 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 12:40-1:10-3:25-4-6:40-7:10-9:25-9:55
WWE: Armageddon (STC) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Sun 6
Zack and Miri Make a Porno (18A) SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 10:15 SR Dolby Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 10

EMPIRE STUDIO 10 MACLEOD TRAIL
100-16061 MacLeod Trail, 403-974-0470

Australia (PG) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Tue 12:15-3:50-7:40 DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 12:15-3:50 DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 12:15-3:50-7:40
Bolt in Disney Digital 3D (G) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating, Digital Presentation Fri-Wed 2-4:30-7-9:30 DTS Digital, Stadium Seating, Digital Presentation Thu 2-4:30-9:30
The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) Stadium Seating, SR Dolby Digital Fri-Thu 12:30-1-3:10-3:40-6:50-7:20-9:40-10:10
Delgo (PG) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:10-3:20-6:30
Four Christmases (PG) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:50-4:20-7:30
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:30-4-6:40-9
The Nutcracker Ballet (STC) Digital Presentation, Stadium Seating Sat 1
Punisher: War Zone (18A) Stadium Seating, DTS Digital Fri 1:40-4:15-7:15-9:55 Stadium Seating, DTS Digital Sat 7:15-9:55 Stadium Seating, DTS Digital Sun 1:40-4:15-7:15-9:55 Stadium Seating, DTS Digital Mon 1:40-4:15-9:55 Stadium Seating, DTS Digital Tue 1:40-4:15-7:15-9:55 Stadium Seating, DTS Digital Wed-Thu 1:40-4:15-9:55
Quantum of Solace (14A) Stadium Seating, SR Dolby Digital Fri-Thu 1:20-4:10-7:10-9:20-9:50
Twilight (PG) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:45-3:30-6:45-9:45

GLOBE CINEMA
617-8 Avenue, 403-262-3308

Brick Lane (PG) Fri 7 Sat-Sun 1-3:10-7 Mon-Thu 7
Changeling (14A) Fri 6:30-9:05 Sat-Sun 12:30-3:05-6:30-9:05 Mon-Thu 6:30-9:05
What Just Happened? (14A) Fri-Thu 9:10

MOVIEDOME
1039 999 36 St., 403-248-2000

Beverly Hills Chihuahua (G) Fri-Thu 12:55-3:55-6:40
City of Ember (PG) Fri-Thu 1:05-4-7-10
Eagle Eye (14A) Fri-Thu 12:45-3:45-6:45-9:40
The Express (PG) Fri-Thu 12:45-3:35-6:45-9:35
Heaven on Earth (STC) Fri-Thu 12:50-3:35-9:55
How to Lose Friends & Alienate People (14A) Fri-Thu 1-3:40-6:55-9:50
Igor (PG) Fri-Thu 1-4:05
Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi (STC) Fri 2-6:30-7:30-8:30-9:30-10:30 Sat-Thu 2-6:30-7:30-8:30-9:30
Sex Drive (18A) Fri-Thu 12:50-3:50-6:50-9:45

SCOTIABANK CHINOOK
6455 MacLeod Trail, 403-212-8994

Australia (PG) Fri-Thu 12:30-4-8
Bolt (G) Fri-Thu 1:10-3:45-6:50 Fri-Thu 11:45-2:15-4:50-7:20-9:50
Changeling (14A) Fri-Wed 12:15-3:40-7:05-10:20 Thu 12:15-3:40-10:20
The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 12:30-3:15-6:45-9:45 No Passes Fri-Thu 1-4-7:20-10:30
The Day the Earth Stood Still: The IMAX Experience (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 12-2:30-5:05-7:35-10:15
Delgo (PG) Fri-Thu 12:10-3:30-6:50
Four Christmases (PG) Fri-Thu 1:10-4:20-7:15-9:40-10:20
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Fri-Tue 12-2:20-4:40-7-9:20 Wed 12-2:20-4:40-9:20 Thu 12-2:20-4:40-7-9:20
Milk (14A) Fri-Thu 12:45-3:50-7:05-10:10
Nutcracker/Casse-Noisette (STC) Sat 12
Punisher: War Zone (18A) Fri-Thu 1:20-4:20-7:20-10:25
Quantum of Solace (14A) Fri-Thu 1-4-7-10-10:30
Role Models (14A) Fri-Sat 1:20-4:15-7:10-10:05 Sun 1:20-4:15-10:05 Mon-Thu 1:20-4:15-7:10-10:05
Transporter 3 (14A) Fri-Thu 1:25-4:25-7:25-10:25
Twilight (PG) Fri-Thu 1-4:10-7:10-10:15
WWE: Armageddon (STC) Sun 6
Zack and Miri Make a Porno (18A) Fri 1:15-4:10-7:15-10:10 Sat 4:10-7:15-10:10 Sun 1:15-4:10-7:15-10:10 Mon 1:15-4:10-10:10 Tue-Thu 1:15-4:10-7:15-10:10

PLAZA THEATRE
1133 Kensington Rd., 403-283-3636

Four Wings and a Prayer (STC) Sun 12
It's a Wonderful Life (STC) Sat 2:15
JCVD (14A) Fri 3-5-7-9-11 Sat 7-9-11 Sun 4:15-9:25 Mon-Tue 5-7-9 Wed 5-9:25 Thu 5-7-9
Jesus Christ Vampire Hunter (STC) Thu 3:10-10:45
Rebecca (STC) Wed 7
A Sex Pistols Xmas (STC) Thu
Tell No One (14A) Sat 4:35 Sun 1:45

SUNRIDGE SPECTRUM
2555 32nd Street, 403-717-1200

Australia (PG) Fri-Thu 12:20-3:55-8
Bolt (G) Fri-Thu 1-3:45 Fri-Thu 12:05-2:50-6:45-9:25
Chakk de Phatte (In Punjabi) (PG) Fri-Thu 12-3:15-6:40-9:55
The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Fri-Thu 12:10-12:50-2:55-3:40-7-7:30-9:50-10:15
Delgo (PG) Fri-Thu 1:05-3:35-7:15
Four Christmases (PG) Fri-Thu 12:30-3:05-7:20-9:45
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Fri-Tue 12:35-3-6:30-9 Wed 12:35-3-10 Thu 12:35-3-6:30-9
Nothing Like the Holidays (PG) Fri-Thu 12:45-3:25-6:35-9:15
Punisher: War Zone (18A) Fri-Thu 12:40-3:30-7:25-10:10
Quantum of Solace (14A) Fri-Thu 12:15-3:10-7:05-10
Role Models (14A) Fri-Thu 6:50-9:30
Transporter 3 (14A) Fri-Sat 12:55-3:50-6:55-9:40 Sun 12:55-9:40 Mon-Wed 12:55-3:50-6:55-9:40 Thu 12:55-3:50-9:40
Twilight (PG) Fri-Thu 12:25-3:20-7:10-9:35-10:05
WWE: Armageddon (STC) Sun 5

THE UPTOWN STAGE & SCREEN
612 8th Ave., 403-265-0120

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (PG) Fri 6:50-9:10 Sat-Sun 12:30-2:30-6:50-9:10 Mon-Thu 6:50-9:10
Happy-Go-Lucky (14A) Fri 9 Sat-Sun 2:20-9 Mon-Thu 9
Outsourced (PG) Fri 5-7 Sat-Sun 12:15-5-7 Mon-Thu 5-7
Religulous (14A) Fri-Thu 4:50

WESTHILLS 10
165 Stewart Green, 403-246-5291

Australia (PG) Fri-Sun 1-4:30-8 Mon-Thu 5-8:30
Bolt (G) Fri-Sun 1:05-3:55-7:20-9:50 Mon-Thu 6:05-8:35
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (PG) Fri-Sun 1:30-4:20-7:15-9:35 Mon-Thu 5:55-8:25
Changeling (14A) Fri-Sun 12:25-6:40 Mon-Thu 5:15
The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Fri-Sun 1:20-4:10-7:30-10:10 No Passes Mon-Thu 6:10-8:45
Four Christmases (PG) Fri-Sun 12:30-3:10-7-9:25 Mon-Thu 5:30-7:45
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Fri-Sun 12:45-3:30-7:05-9:20 Mon 5:35 Tue 5:35-8 Wed 8 Thu 5:35-8
Nutcracker/Casse-Noisette (STC) Sat 12
Quantum of Solace (14A) Fri-Sun 12:40-3:25-6:50-9:40 Mon-Thu 5:25-7:55
Rachel Getting Married (STC) Fri-Sun 3:35-9:55 Mon-Thu 8:10
Transporter 3 (14A) Fri 1:10-3:50-7:40-10:20 Sat 3:50-7:40-10:20 Sun 1:10-3:50-7:40-10:20 Mon 8:50 Tue 5:50-8:50 Wed 5:50 Thu 5:50-8:50
Twilight (PG) Fri-Sun 12:20-3:15-7:10-10:05 Mon-Thu 5:20-8:05

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metro Do it daily.

The bestselling albums at Amazon.ca
1. And Winter Came, Enya; **2.** Priests, The Priests; **3.** A Winter Symphony, Brightman, Sarah; **4.** A Midwinter Night's Dream, Loreena McKennitt; **5.** Day And Age, The Killers. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Music

Fresh takes on holiday music

SoundCheck

Alan Cross

alan@ongoinghistory.com

The way I see it, there are three types of people when it comes to the music of the holidays. There are those who love every single note of Christmas cheer. Then there are those who grind their teeth to the roots every time they're assaulted with yet another rendition of The Little Drummer Boy. And there's a third group — people like me who like new and unusual seasonal songs.

Some pathological urge demands that I collect non-traditional Christmas music. Here's a sample of what you'll hear in my house this holiday season.

- **White Christmas, Stiff Little Fingers:** If we must hear this song, the default version is from Belfast's best punk rock band. Available on Punk Rock Christmas (Rhino).
- **Run, Rudolph, Run, Lemmy and friends:** Lemmy (he of Motorhead and the interesting facial growths) teams up with Dave Grohl (Foo Fighters) and Billy Gibbons (ZZ Top) to offer a new guttural version of a secular classic. The album from which it comes also features contributions from Tony Iommi (Black Sabbath) and Alice Cooper. Available on We Wish You a Metal Xmas and a Headbanging New Year (Armoury Records).
- **Sometimes You Have to Work on Christmas (Sometimes), Harvey Danger:** Poignant tribute to those who don't get the day off. Especially meaningful to those who work in movie theatres. Available on: 20th Century Masters: The Millennium Collection (Universal).
- **A Christmas Duel, The Hives featuring Cyndi Lauper:** A Christmas song that starts with the line "I bought no gifts this year/And I slept with your sister" is guaranteed to attract attention. And what's Cyndi Lauper doing here? Free at thehivesbroadcastingservice.com

The Ongoing History of New Music can be heard on stations across Canada. Read more at ongoinghistory.com and exploremusic.com.

The Dears are reborn

Band returns with new disc following internal meltdown

ROB MCMAHON
for Metro Canada

What does a frontman do when faced with a band meltdown on the cusp of a new album?

If you're Murray Lightburn from the Dears, you pick up a video camera. The band's website now features The Gospel According to the Dears, a candid mini documentary chronicling the band's history. And making it wasn't easy — especially episode three.

"(At some points) people were firing off both barrels in my face…It was a little painful at times, but also cathartic, and put everything in its place," said Lightburn. "(The project) originated when I had a friend telling me maybe I should see some kind of counselor, because of how much the meltdown of the band affected me … Instead of seeing a counselor, I decided to try and understand the band."

PHOTO HANDOUT

Montreal's The Dears play the MacEwan Conference And Event Centre Dec. 18 & 19.

Throughout the band's 13-year history, Lightburn has employed a tightly managed, product-oriented approach. Beginning with a blueprint, he works to fit everyone's parts in it, rather than "throwing things around." For example, he describes Missiles as a musical. Disclaimer is the prologue that dissolves into a scene shot after an explosion, before moving to the main conflict point at the end of Lights Off and then fading to the album's denouement. While this process results in rewarding music — the best Dears songs combine mythological storytelling with intricate prog-rock arrangements — past members also bring up stifled creativity and high demands.

"I'm a noted control freak, no question — I'll confess to that any time of day — but I think I've learned … that it's OK to just allow something to happen. To close your eyes, spread your arms, fall backwards and see what happens," he said. "It's such a stressful thing, trying to control something as intangible as art can be."

After the recent conflict, Lightburn began writing songs for a solo project, but as the work progressed, decided they were better expressed as Dears songs. Working with his wife and band partner Natalia Yanchak, he tried to chill out.

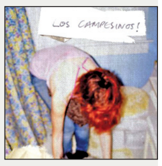
As heard in the relaxed saxophone solo of album opener Disclaimer, (before the song progresses into alternatively pleading and angry lyrics), the duo between Lighburn and Yanchak during Money Babies, and the ended outro of Saviour, the new songs work to avoid being overshadowed by the accompanying drama. Lightburn describes them as big plates of mutton and gristle: He hopes listeners take time to chew over them.

Metro recommends

- **NEIL YOUNG, SUGAR MOUNTAIN:** Revisit 1968 and hear a playful, young Neil perform a solo set of future classics with coffee-house intimacy.

- **BRITNEY SPEARS, CIRCUS:** Dance club anthems and sassy love songs strut along with an electronic-pop sound that's not the same old BS.

- **LOS CAMPESINOS!, WE ARE BEAUTIFUL, WE ARE DOOMED:** Frenetic indie-pop with clever thematic twists, girl-guy harmonies and cheeky U.K. charm. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**



TOP10
MOBILE DOWNLOADS
1 Live Your Life
T.I. ft. Rihanna
2 Right Now (Na Na Na)
Akon
3 My Life
The Game
4 Poker Face
Lady Gaga
5 Rock N' Roll Train
AC/DC
6 Hot N Cold
Katy Perry
7 Love Lockdown
Kanye West
8 Womanizer
Britney Spears
9 So What
Pink
10 Winter Wonderland
Ella Fitzgerald
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Calgary Maranatha Spanish SDA Church
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This Day In Music History — 2001

Dave Grohl and Krist Novoselic file a countersuit against Courtney Love. The case involves the release of Nirvana material. The suit is in response to an action Love filed earlier that claims Nirvana's contract with Universal Music is void. **REUTERS**

Bon Jovi top touring act

Bon Jovi was the top touring act in 2008, just ahead of Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band, according to sales data collected by Billboard.

Bon Jovi's Lost Highway trek through North America and Europe grossed $210.6 million US. Springsteen's Magic tour pulled in $204.5 million. The survey covers the period Nov. 14, 2007, through Nov. 11, 2008. Rounding out Billboard Boxscore's Top 10 were Madonna, with $162 million for the still-underway Sticky & Sweet tour, the Police which earned $150 million on the second leg of their reunion tour, Celine Dion who took in $91 million and Kenny Chesney with $86 million).

Others on the list were Neil Diamond who earned $81.2 million, the Spice Girls who netted $70 million, the Eagles with $56.6 million and Rascal Flatts ($55.8 million). **REUTERS**

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Northland Village Shopping Centre
Park Place
Peter Pond Shopping Centre
Red Deer Centre
Sherwood Park Mall
Sunridge Mall
West Edmonton Mall

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Mischa getting ugly?
Former The O.C. star Mischa Barton looks set to be returning to TV screens — the actress is reportedly in talks to join the cast of Ugly Betty. **IMDB.COM**

Television

What's Oprah's weight got to do with it?

IntelleVision
Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

> **"It's hard to compare the extra time Oprah might have spent at the snack table backstage with defaulted mortgages."**

SOMETIMES AN ÉCLAIR IS JUST AN ÉCLAIR: There's a theory making the rounds that the current economic downturn is a good thing in disguise — that being shocked out of the complacent habits of prosperity and the social status quo is the ultimate form of "creative destruction," burning away out-of-date ideas and habits and forcing us to look at the world in a whole new way.

Sometimes, however, it's just an invitation for increasingly tenuous and absurd lunges at social diagnosis, such as a piece in Tina Brown's Daily Beast current affairs web magazine this week by writer and comic Jessi Klein. The subject at hand is Oprah Winfrey's recent weight gain, the subject of an apparently anguished confession in the recent issue of Winfrey's O magazine, which Klein sees as a physical reflection of the subprime mortgage meltdown and credit crunch behind our current economic insecurity.

"Oprah concludes that her latest chub-battle has led her to adjust her weight objective," Klein writes. "She's no longer striving to be thin, she says, but simply to balance health with giving herself 'the love and care' she needs. So 2009 finds Oprah and the rest of the country adjusting to a new resolve. None of us, no matter what the size of our wallets, can be perfect. But when we waver from our budgets, we'll be downsizing our indulgences. For Oprah, that might mean a cookie instead of a whole cake; for the rest of us, perhaps a movie instead of an Escalade."

It's at times like this that the tantalizing lure of metaphor — for writers especially — looks like epistemological crack, cheap, addictive and damaging. Oprah's weight gain is to be understood as one woman's caloric interpretation of social insecurity seeking solace in materialism; it's a sophomoric equation at best, one best discarded with undergrad English Lit essays. It's hard to compare the extra time Oprah might have spent at the snack table backstage with credit card debt and defaulted mortgages; Oprah paid for the food she's eaten, after all, and her decision to supersize herself by 40 lbs. wasn't facilitated by governments and banks underwriting fatty foods, and won't end in seizure and public auction of her waistline.

Klein seems to think that the cure for our widespread economic bingeing should be the prohibition of Escalades and "cashmere-iPoddy things that should have been off limits," and quotes Oprah's assessment that her overindulgence was "a love issue." Whatever imprudence might have motivated so much bad debt, love probably had less to do with it than woeful incomprehension of the concept of interest and the seriousness of the due date at the top of a bill.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

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GlobalStyle
Kenya Hunt

Exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle

Two more seasons for Deperate Housewives?

Desperate Housewives in 2012?

> **"We're going to find a way to make it work."**
> Series creator Marc Cherry

Series creator Marc Cherry let slip Wednesday that he is in talks with ABC about continuing the hit comedy-drama for another two seasons.

"I started recently talks with (ABC Entertainment president) Steve McPherson and (ABC Studios president) Mark Pedowitz about continuing the show for a ninth season," Cherry was quoted saying at a cake-cutting ceremony for the show's 100th episode. "We're going to find a way to make it work."

ABC confirmed the plan but stressed that no deals have been made.

Housewives, now in its fifth season, is yet to be officially renewed beyond May, but ABC has previously indicated that it would stay on the schedule at least until 2010.

For the past year, Cherry had been saying publicly that he intended to set a firm end date for the series after seven seasons.

He acknowledged that he recently had changed his mind as the show rebounded creatively and ratings-wise this fall, ranking as ABC's top scripted series. "... The ratings are terrific," Cherry said.

REUTERS

New series shows gays coming out

SEXUALITY Showtime is developing a reality series documenting gay people coming out to friends and family.

The project is titled Way Out. In each episode, a closeted individual reveals their true sexual orientation during a group meeting. Showtime has ordered a pilot presentation from Bryn Freedman, a former journalist, as part of its effort to bolster its unscripted slate. Out will show the person's closeted life, document the moment they reveal their orientation, then chart how their lives are changed.

REUTERS

Rock, Mad Men get more nods

AWARDS 30 Rock and Mad Men collected even more kudos on Wednesday.

The shows, which took home top series honors at this year's Emmys and earned Writers Guild Award nominations this week, are among the TV nominees for the 20th annual Producers Guild Awards, announced Wednesday.

Nominees in the film and longform TV categories, along with all producers determined eligible for the award, will be announced Jan. 5. Awards will be handed out Jan. 24.

REUTERS

Christmas TV begins

Rick's TVPicks

A Muppets Christmas: Letters To Santa

Air date: Dec. 17
Network: CTV

Whoopi Goldberg, Uma Thurman, Richard Griffiths and Jane Krakowski keep up the Muppets tradition of idiosyncratic guest choices on the latest holiday special from the people who brought you Peter Sellers singing Cigarettes, Whisky And Wild, Wild Women on the Muppet Show.

The Best Of The Hills Parodies

Air date: Saturday
Network: MTV

Making fun of The Hills is actually more fun than watching the thing, a fact that gets celebrated with this hour-long special collecting Hills take-offs — there are obviously more than enough.

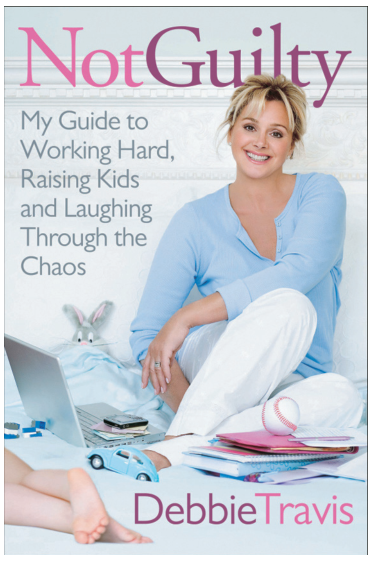
Mall Santas

Air date: Dec. 18
Network: Global

It's not Miracle on 34th Street, but it's not Bad Santa, either. The world of the mall Santa gets explored with three pro Santas whose lives might not exactly be Christmas every day.

RICK MCGINNIS/METRO CANADA

PLEASE CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR SHOWS' AIR TIMES.


NotGuilty
My Guide to Working Hard, Raising Kids and Laughing Through the Chaos
DebbieTravis

This Christmas, is TRUTH stranger than FICTION?

"Treat your kids like a paint job. It's all in the preparation. Take the time to sand and prime well and the results will be as good as perfect. Don't worry too much about the cracks or blotches – they just add character." —Debbie Travis

Books = Gifts

"I dare you to read this without flinching. It's as engrossing as it is gruesome, the kind of horror you watch with one eye closed." —*The Washington Post*

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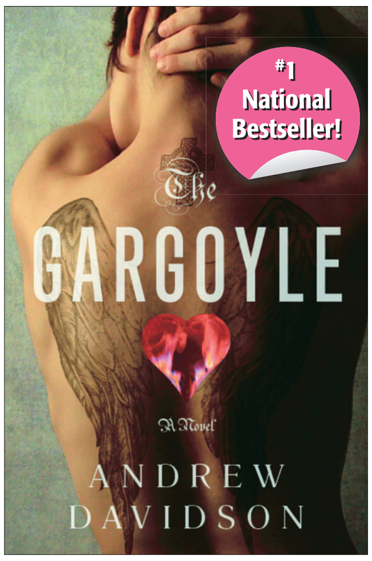


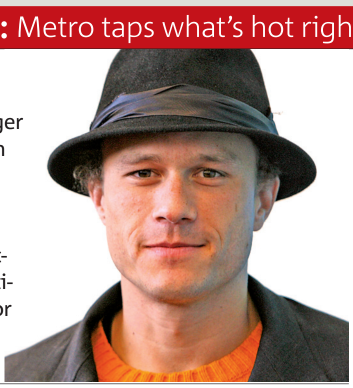
Spelling in talks to appear on 90210

Tori Spelling is reportedly in talks again to appear on 90210. Although nothing is official, Spelling's Donna Martin character may arrive for a couple of episodes in the spring, possibly for one of the shows that Jason Priestley will direct. **TVGUIDE.COM**

Metro's 7th Heaven: Metro taps what's hot right now

1 Heath Ledger

Late actor Heath Ledger is garnering attention again for his work as the Joker in The Dark Knight, fresh out on DVD. He's been posthumously named best actor by the Australian Film Institute and best supporting actor by the Washington D.C. Area Film Critics Association.



2 Hollywood baby boom

The result of spring fever, perhaps? A bevy of celebrities announced new arrivals this week: Eric Mabius (boy), America's Next Top Model judge Nigel Barker, pictured (girl), Amy Jo Johnson (girl) and Jonny Lee Miller (boy).

3 Grey's Anatomy

The ABC medical show has spawned more off-set drama, with Brooke Smith, pictured, who played Dr. Erica Hahn, saying there are no hard feelings after being booted off the show. And now there are rumours swirling that T.R. Knight is looking to be released from his contract.

4 The cape jacket

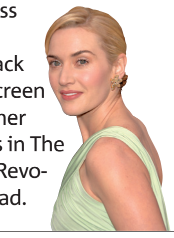
Stars like singer Kylie Minogue and actress Leighton Meester are wrapping up in sleeveless, hooded jackets, with beige and blue being the colours of choice, female-first.co.uk reports. The cape combines the warmth of a cardigan with the smart silhouette of a jacket.

5 Elisha Cuthbert

Actress Elisha Cuthbert has so far taken the high road by remaining mum on comments made by her ex, Dallas Stars Sean Avery. He referred to Cuthbert as "my sloppy seconds" in a TV interview while poking fun at rival and Cuthbert's current flame, Dion Phaneuf.

6 Kate Winslet

Oscar-nominated actress Kate Winslet is back on the big screen to show off her acting chops in The Reader and Revolutionary Road.



7 New Year's Eve

No plans? Head to New York to see the Jonas Brothers, Taylor Swift and Lionel Richie on Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve.

Mix of Six

HOT & HAPPENING WEEKEND EVENTS

Showing off Shakespeare

Tonight, 7 p.m.
Rocky Mountain College,
4039 Brentwood Rd. NW

Playhouse North School of Theatre students show off their skills with snippets from different Shakespearian works. Consider it a potpourri for $5. Go to www.playhousenorth.ca for more information.

Free frolic

Tomorrow
4th Street SW

4th Street's Lilac festival kicks off summer every year, so why not jump start Christmas at Frolicking on Fourth? The winter event features a craft fair, sleigh rides and caroling. No charge. If only there was no snow.

Fresh talent

Tomorrow, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Macleod Trail Chapters

Calgary writer Samantha Warwick's novel, Sage Island, resurrects a 22-mile swimming race from Catalina Island to L.A. and invokes the era of flappers. Warwick will be signing copies.

Rock for rehab

Tonight
Broken City, 613 11th Ave. SW

Bluegrass, rock and country unite for birds of prey. The lineup – including James Dangerous and the C.I.A., Erin Ross and Nushi — rock out to benefit the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society.

Calgary FD blows own horns

Tomorrow, 7 p.m.
Leacock Theatre, Mount Royal College

A collection of talented amateur musicians, the Cappy Smart Band's members include many active and retired firefighters. This hot ensemble performs its annual Christmas concert to benefit veterans.

Less drama, more hockey

Sunday, 2 p.m.
Pengrowth Saddledome

The Calgary Hitmen take shots at the Kelowna Rockets in afternoon WHL action. Bets are no one gets suspended for shooting off his mouth about his ex-girlfriends a la troublemaker Sean Avery.

Ex-NBC treasurer gets jail for fraud

JUSTICE A former treasurer at NBC Universal was sentenced to a year and one day in prison yesterday for his role in a scheme to embezzle more than $1 million US from the media company.

Victor Jung, 36, had pleaded guilty earlier this year to three counts of wire fraud and one count of conspiracy stemming from a scheme to steal from NBC Universal, which is 80 per cent owned by General Electric Co. and 20 per cent by Vivendi SA.

His sentence was announced by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan.

REUTERS

FRIDAY

CA	Vu SC	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/12/08	243 317 3 CFCN	etalk	Hollywood	Law & Order		The Rankin Family Reunion (N)		Supernanny (N)		News (N)
	- 371 5 KXLY	4 News at 6	4 News at 6:30	Entertainment	The Insider (N)	Wife Swap (N)		Supernanny (N)		20/20
	245 306 6 CBRT	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town		Doctor Who		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	244 338 7 CICT	ET Canada	Entertainment	90210 (HDTV)		NUMB3RS "Power"		Life "Canyon Flowers"		News Hour
	246 - 8 CKAL	Law & Order: SVU		Songs of the Season		Crusoe		Lipstick Jungle (N)		Your City
	119 705 9 CBXFT	Du coeur au ventre (N) (SC)		Paquet voleur (N) (SC)		Une heure sur Terre (N) (SC)		Le Téléjournal (N) (SC)		TJ Alberta
	- 372 12 KREM	News (N)	Hollywood	The Doctors (N)		Frosty	Frosty Returns	*The Flight Before Christmas*		NUMB3RS
	- 374 14 KSPS	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer		Wash. Week	McLaughlin	Bill Moyers Journal (N)		NOW on PBS	Being Served	Vicar of Dibley
	- 370 16 KHQ	News (N)	Be-Millionaire	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel-Fortune	Songs of the Season		Lipstick Jungle (N)		Dateline NBC
	- 373 22 KAYU	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Smarter Than a 5th Grader?		Don't Forget the Lyrics!		News (N)
news	502 390 15 CBC	CBC News: The National		CBC News: the fifth estate		CBC News: The National		CBC News: The National		fifth estate
	500 500 29 CNN	Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)				Larry King Live		Cooper 360
	501 391 52 CTV	CTV Newsnet		News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News
sports	400 400 21 TSN	NBA Basketball		SportsCentre (HDTV) (Live)			Off the Record	Boxing Verno Phillips vs. Paul Williams.		
	408 418 27 net	NHL Hockey Florida Panthers at Calgary Flames. (HDTV) (Live)					Sportsnet Con.	Sportsnet Connected		Ult. Fighter
family	552 543 20 YTV	The Mighty B!	iCarly	*Home Alone* ★★★ (1990, Comedy) Macaulay Culkin.				Smallville "Siren"		Dark Oracle
	557 541 39 FAM	Zoey 101	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	*Jack Frost* ★★ (1998, Fantasy)			(10:11) *The Christmas Star* (1986)		
cable variety	- - 18 CHTV	The Insider (N)	E News	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	Smarter Than a 5th Grader?		20/20 (HDTV)		News (N)
	603 561 25 FOOD	Chef Abroad	The Wild Chef	Diner, Drive-In	Diner, Drive-In	Ace of Cakes	Ace of Cakes	Challenge		Chef Abroad
	615 520 26 A&E	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		CSI: Miami "All In"		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		CSI: Miami "Grand Prix"		CSI: Miami
	617 522 32 SHOW	EastEnders	Little Britain	The Best Years (DVS)		The Guard "Waheguru"		Testees	Kenny-Spenny	Webdreams
	520 505 35 DISC	Man vs. Wild (N)		Science of Interrogation		Daily Planet		Man vs. Wild		Greensburg
	628 584 43 SPIKE	UFC Unleashed		UFC Unleashed		Jackass	I Bet You Will	GameTrailers	Next Great	MXC
	522 516 45 HIST	Ultimate Engineering		NCIS "Honor Code"		Shockwave		Ultimate Engineering		Ax Men
	581 566 102 MTV	A Double Shot of Love		The Hills	The Hills	After Show	Girls-Latitude	Super Sweet	Super Sweet	The Hills

SATURDAY

CA	Vu SC	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/13/08	243 317 3 CFCN	W-FIVE-Peace Warrior		*Last Exit* (2006, Suspense) Kathleen Robertson. (DVS)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	- 371 5 KXLY	News	The Insider (N)	Entertainment Tonight		Funniest Home Videos		*Surviving Christmas* ★ (2004, Comedy)		
	245 306 6 CBRT	NHL Hockey		NHL Hockey Vancouver Canucks at Edmonton Oilers. (HDTV) (Live)					HNIC -- After Hours	
	244 338 7 CICT	Billy Graham Special (N)		Doc Nancy is mugged.		Painkiller Jane		Kenny-Spenny	Kenny-Spenny	News (N)
	246 - 8 CKAL	Survivorman (DVS)		Crusoe		*Out of Sync* (2000, Drama) Gail O'Grady, Kari Wuhrer.				The City Show
	119 705 9 CBXFT	*Un empereur nouveau genre*		*Shrek 2* ★★★ (2004, Comédie) Voices of Mike Myers. (SC)				Le Téléjournal	Tellement	*Pacte-loups*
	- 372 12 KREM	News (N)	Time Life	Operation Smile Free surgery.		Eleventh Hour "Cardiac"		48 Hours-Boot Camp		48 Hr. Mystery
	- 374 14 KSPS	The Lawrence Welk Show		May-December	Time Goes By	(9:05) *Ballet Shoes* (2007, Drama)			4 Star Theatre	Tonic Sol-Fa
	- 370 16 KHQ	News (N)	Raymond	CSI: NY (HDTV)		*It's a Wonderful Life* ★★★★ (1946, Comedy-Drama) James Stewart.				
	- 373 22 KAYU	Boston Legal		House "Autopsy"		Cops (N)	Cops	America's Most Wanted		News (N)
news	502 390 15 CBC	Sat. Report	Mansbridge	Doc Zone		Sat. Report	Weekend	Sat. Report	Mansbridge	Doc Zone
	500 500 29 CNN	Larry King Live		D.L. Hughley Breaks the News		Special Investigations		Larry King Live		D.L. Hughley
	501 391 52 CTV	CTV Newsnet-Scott Laurie		News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News
sports	400 400 21 TSN	(6) Boxing (HDTV)		SportsCentre (HDTV) (Live)			PGA Tour Golf Merrill Lynch Shootout -- Second Round.			
	408 418 27 net	The Ultimate Fighter (Live)				Sportsnet Connected		Saturday Night Poker		Sportsnet Con.
family	552 543 20 YTV	Charlie Brown	Yogi's Caper	A Flintstones Christmas Carol			He-Man, She-Ra Christmas		Invader Zim	Ren & Stimpy
	557 541 39 FAM	Natural-Sadie	Flight 29 Down	That's-Raven	Zoey 101	Life Derek	Han. Montana	*Call Me Claus* ★★ (2001, Comedy)		
cable variety	- - 18 CHTV	E News	The Soup (N)	Soup Presents	Behind-Scenes	*Surviving Christmas* ★ (2004, Comedy) Ben Affleck.				E News
	603 561 25 FOOD	Top Chef		Kitchen Nightmares		The F Word		Challenge		Top Chef
	615 520 26 A&E	CSI: Miami "10-7"		The Sopranos (HDTV)		The Sopranos (HDTV)		CSI: Miami "Whacked"		CSI: Miami
	617 522 32 SHOW	TBA	Trailer Park	About a Girl	Kink in Hair	*Recipe for a Perfect Christmas* (2005, Romance-Comedy)				*The Descent*
	520 505 35 DISC	Canada's Worst Driver		Criss Angel	Criss Angel	A Haunting Mary Vogel.		Canada's Worst Driver		Criss Angel
	628 584 43 SPIKE	The Ultimate Fighter (HDTV) (Live)						The Ultimate Fighter (HDTV)		
	522 516 45 HIST	Captain Cook: Obsession		NCIS "Kill Ari"		Ancestors	Ancestors	*The Sentinel* ★★ (2006, Suspense)		
	581 566 102 MTV	MTV News	Girls-Latitude	Cribs	Cribs	Cribs	Cribs	Cribs	Cribs	MTV Live

SUNDAY

CA	Vu SC	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/14/08	243 317 3 CFCN	*Anne of Green Gables: A New Beginning* (2008, Drama) Shirley MacLaine. (DVS)						CSI: NY		News (N)
	- 371 5 KXLY	News	Paid Program	Funniest Home Videos		*The Santa Clause 2* ★★ (2002, Comedy) Tim Allen.				Housewives
	245 306 6 CBRT	Red-Nosed Reindeer		*The Polar Express* ★★★ (2004, Fantasy), Nona Gaye				CBC News: Sunday Night (N)		fifth estate
	244 338 7 CICT	16:9 Picture	The Simpsons	Survivor: Gabon (HDTV) (Season Finale) (N)				Survivor: Gabon		News (N)
	246 - 8 CKAL	Murdoch	2Half Men	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Stylista		Reviews
	119 705 9 CBXFT	Découverte	Et Dieu créa	T pour théâtre (N) (SC)			Tout le monde	Le Téléjournal	Jacques Ferron	
	- 372 12 KREM	News (N)		60 Minutes		Survivor: Gabon (HDTV) (Season Finale) (N)				Survivor Gab
	- 374 14 KSPS	Spain ... On the Road Again		Nature (DVS)		Jackie Gleason		Chicano Rock! The Sounds		Mystery!
	- 370 16 KHQ	(6:15) NFL Football New York Giants at Dallas Cowboys. (HDTV) (Live)					Best Sports	Law & Order: SVU		CSI: NY
	- 373 22 KAYU	House "Humpty Dumpty"		King of the Hill	King of the Hill	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Family Guy	American Dad	News (N)
news	502 390 15 CBC	CBC News: Sunday Night (N)		Charles Other Mistress		Royal Rivals? Charles, William		CBC News: Sunday Night		Mistress
	500 500 29 CNN	Larry King Live		D.L. Hughley Breaks the News		Special Investigations		Larry King Live		D.L. Hughley
	501 391 52 CTV	CTV Newsnet-Scott Laurie		News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News
sports	400 400 21 TSN	(6:15) NFL Football New York Giants at Dallas Cowboys. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre		PGA Tour Golf: Shootout	
	408 418 27 net	Air Race	World Combat	The Ultimate Fighter				Sportsnet Connected		Poker
family	552 543 20 YTV	Garfield Cmas	Smurfy	Charlie Brown	Flintstone Xms	A Flintstone Christmas		(10:15) ALF	(10:45) ALF	Falcon Beach
	557 541 39 FAM	Natural-Sadie	Flight 29 Down	That's-Raven	Zoey 101	Life Derek	Han. Montana	*Babes in Toyland* ★★ (1997, Musical)		
cable variety	- - 18 CHTV	Greatest Myst.	Greatest Myst.	Extreme Makeover: Home		*Recipe for a Perfect Christmas* (2005, Romance-Comedy)				FANatical
	603 561 25 FOOD	Iron Chef America		Jamie at Home Christmas Spe		Chef School	At the Table	Challenge		Iron Chef Am.
	615 520 26 A&E	CSI: Miami "Rush"		CSI: Miami (HDTV)		CSI: Miami "Burned"		CSI: Miami "Three-Way"		CSI: Miami
	617 522 32 SHOW	TBA	Trailer Park	The Guard (HDTV)		*The Christmas Choir* (2008, Drama) Jason Gedrick.				*Lady in Water*
	520 505 35 DISC	Canada's Worst Driver		MythBusters		Anthony Bourdain		Canada's Worst Driver		Worst Driver
	628 584 43 SPIKE	Spike TV's Video Game Awards 2008 (HDTV) (Live)				Spike TV's Video Game Awards 2008 (HDTV)				Video Awards
	522 516 45 HIST	Finding the Fallen		NCIS "Mind Games"		Lost Worlds		*The Quick and the Dead* (1995, Western)		
	581 566 102 MTV	Cribs	Cribs	Cribs	Cribs	MTV Live	Girls-Latitude	Made Hip hop dancer.		Cribs

Taylor Hanson's wife gives birth to a son
Taylor Hanson, the middle brother of the rock trio Hanson, and his wife Natalie welcomed a son, Viggo Moriah, on Tuesday in Tulsa, Okla. **PEOPLE.COM**

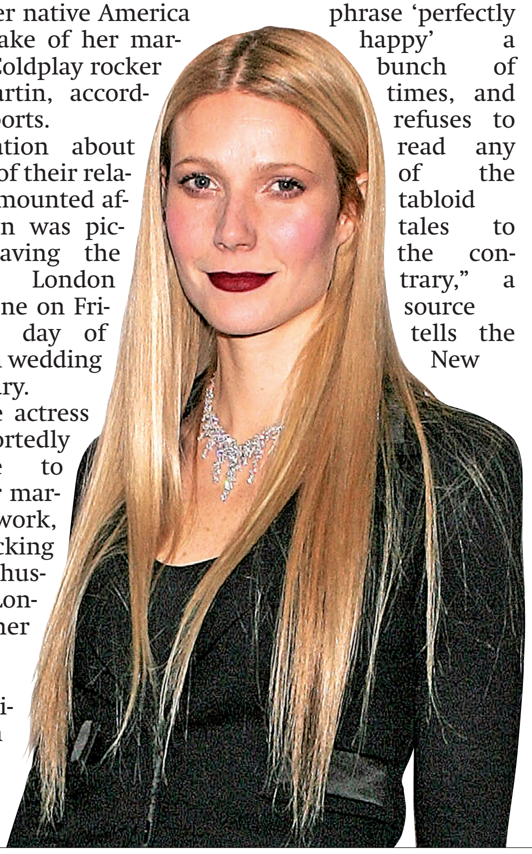
Celebrity Buzz

Paltrow works on marriage

RELATIONSHIPS Gwyneth Paltrow will snub Christmas in her native America for the sake of her marriage to Coldplay rocker Chris Martin, according to reports.

Speculation about the state of their relationship mounted after Martin was pictured leaving the family's London home alone on Friday, the day of their fifth wedding anniversary.

But the actress is reportedly desperate to make her marriage work, and is sticking by her husband in London rather than spending the holidays with her family in the U.S.



"Gwyneth says she's totally fine. She's used the phrase 'perfectly happy' a bunch of times, and refuses to read any of the tabloid tales to the contrary," a source tells the New York Daily News.

The insider insists Paltrow is "staying overseas until the holidays are over," and is "trying to make their marriage better."

However, reports also allege Paltrow is keen to follow in the footsteps of her newly single friend, pop star Madonna, who announced she was divorcing husband Guy Ritchie in October.

"Gwyneth has the Madonna bug ... bad," the source adds. "It's eerie. Gwyneth acts normally until Madonna comes around, and then Gwyn is all about Madonna, all the time. Madge has even introduced Gwyneth to all her friends."

Representatives for Paltrow and Madonna both denied the reports, with the Oscar-winner's representative insisting the claims were "complete nonsense."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Aniston is amused

PEOPLE Jennifer Aniston has poked fun at the constant media interest in her relationship with ex-husband Brad Pitt and his partner Angelina Jolie, likening the trio to an "insane Bermuda triangle," imdb.com reports.

Speculation surrounding the actress' supposed rivalry with Jolie reached boiling point following Aniston's remarks to U.S. Vogue magazine in October, in which she branded Jolie "uncool."

The comments came after Jolie admitted she had fallen in love with Pitt while making 2005's Mr. and Mrs. Smith — when he was still married to Aniston.

But in a new interview with America's GQ magazine, in which Aniston poses naked apart from a men's tie, the star admits she finds the whole situation amusing.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Adams details proposal

MARRIAGE Actress Amy Adams came close to sabotaging her fiance's marriage proposal, because she was in a bad mood, imdb.com reports.

Adams announced her engagement to her artist boyfriend of six years, Darren Le Gallo, back in July. But she didn't reveal how an uncharacteristic bout of diva behaviour almost ruined the whole occasion.

"He had something big and dramatic planned," she says. "He was going to take me out to a really nice dinner and then take me to the top of the Empire State Building. He's scared of heights so he thought that would be significant. But I completely ruined it by saying I wanted to go see a play instead of going to dinner ... He proposed to me in Central Park in a carriage."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Drew linked to Jason Segel

DATING Drew Barrymore has sparked reports she's dating funnyman Jason Segel, five months after ending her year-long romance with actor Justin Long, imdb.com reports.

The actress split from Long in July and has most recently been linked to Gossip Girl star Ed Westwick. But Barrymore has reportedly moved on again with the How I Met Your Mother star Segel, after the pair were allegedly spotted getting cosy at Los Angeles' Chateau Marmont on Nov. 28.

"Drew was all over Jason, rubbing him and kissing his face. He was on Cloud 9," a source tells Star magazine.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jessica wants wedding?

FAMILY Jessica Simpson reportedly wants to "get married in Texas in the summer and get pregnant soon after," femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer, who is dating football star Tony Romo, is said to be desperate to tie the knot and start her family, after seeing her younger sister Ashlee give birth to her own son Bronx Mowgli last month.

"Jessica recently sat Tony down for a baby talk," a friend of Jessica's told In Touch Weekly magazine. "Unlike Ashlee, Jessica doesn't want to get pregnant and then get married. She's a little more traditional, so she'd like to marry Tony first and then get pregnant, ideally on their honeymoon. She wants to get engaged in early 2009, married in Texas in the summer and get pregnant soon after."

It was recently revealed Jessica is "convinced" Dallas Cowboys star Romo is going to propose to her over Christmas.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Cate carries nuptial regret

PEOPLE Cate Blanchett regrets her wedding day, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress, who married playwright Andrew Upton 11 years ago, would love to relive the special day because she has no photographs to remember it by.

"The only moment of my life I would possibly recapture is getting remarried again because we didn't take any photographs," Blanchett says.

"We didn't have any money at the time and we couldn't afford a photographer."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Tyler dating Bing: report

DATING Actress Liv Tyler has found love with model/actress Elizabeth Hurley's multimillionaire ex-boyfriend Steve Bing, according to tabloid reports.

Tyler, 31 who has been single since splitting with husband Royston Langdon earlier this year, was reportedly spotted enjoying a romantic meal with movie producer Bing in Los Angeles on Nov. 30, imdb.com reports.

According to Star magazine, Bing — the father of Hurley's six-year-old son Damian — has been pursuing Tyler for some time.

"She was determined to make a good impression," a source tells Star magazine. "They were laughing and smiling throughout the meal, which lasted two hours."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Pitt admits early love with Jolie

RELATIONSHIPS Even though we all assumed it was true, Brad Pitt openly admits in the new issue of Rolling Stone that he "fell in love" with Angelina Jolie while he was still with Jennifer Aniston, popeater.com reports.

It's the same reason Mr. & Mrs. Smith tops as his favourite movie of all time, he said. "(Angelina) is not only the woman I love, but one of the people on this planet who I have the greatest respect for. I think she's as honorable as anyone I've ever met."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

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Today
Snow
-2 C / -4 C

Saturday
Snow
-20 C / -20 C

Sunday
Partly Cloudy
-24 C / -27 C

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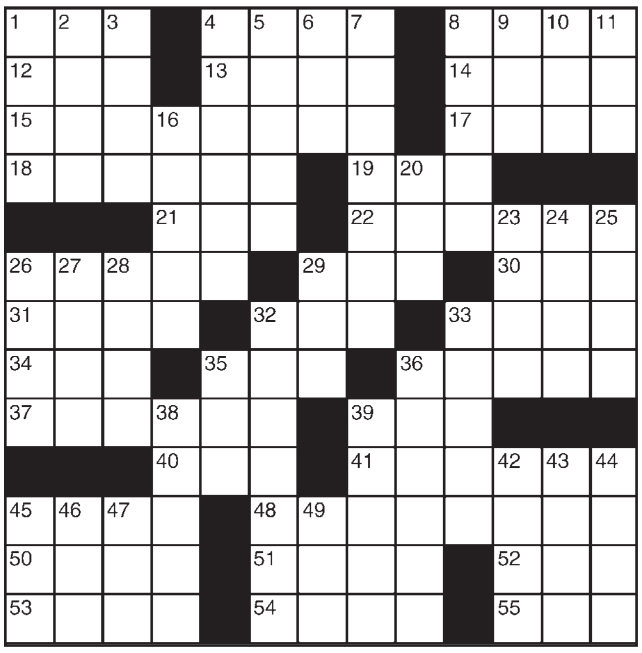
Take Five



Crossword across

1 Standard score
4 Medicos
8 Benefit
12 A mean Amin
13 Maze goal
14 Stop up
15 Nickname for football's George Halas
17 Hodgepodge
18 High-IQ sort
19 Wall St. debut
21 Caviar base
22 Hit repeatedly
26 Sacrifice site
29 Shriner's chapeau
30 Before
31 U.K. conservative
32 Seafood selection
33 Soft cheese
34 Harem room
35 Grow
36 Ship of the desert
37 Apple variety
39 Book-spine abbr.
40 Literary collection
41 Fleet
45 Cereal choice
48 Litter member
50 Indonesian island
51 Cupid's alias
52 2-Down's companion
53 Stylish
54 Paddock parent
55 Homer's neighbor Flanders

Crossword down

1 Knight's backup
2 Leading man?
3 Philbin co-host
4 Credit card user
5 Daisy variety
6 U.S. spy org.
7 Like some shirts
8 Ice cream utensil
9 Every iota
10 Japanese pond fish
11 Diva's problem
16 Splendid setup
20 Dispensable candy
23 Salon request
24 Ontario's neighbor
25 Stagger
26 Having surmounted
27 California city
28 Snare
29 A clever person
32 Hors d'oeuvres
33 Mild
35 Victory
36 Bit part in a whodunit
38 "War of the Worlds" effect
39 Smoke or fog
42 Mideast gulf
43 Peace symbol
44 On in years
45 English channel?
46 "Go, team!"
47 "The Greatest"
49 Spoon-bender Geller

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

			1		5			
	5						7	
7	1	2				5	8	3
		8	5		2	9		
4								6
		3	6		7	4		
8	4	6				2	9	1
	9						5	
			8		9			

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

H	E	L	D	■	S	A	L	T	■	P	R	O
O	B	O	E	■	O	B	E	Y	■	O	I	L
P	O	R	C	E	L	A	I	N	■	R	D	A
I	N	D	I	G	O	■	■	A	S	P	E	N
■	■	■	D	O	■	P	I	N	T	O	■	■
D	O	P	E	■	S	O	B	■	Y	I	P	S
O	N	O	■	■	O	R	E	■	■	S	O	P
G	E	R	M	■	A	C	T	■	Z	E	T	A
■	■	R	A	L	P	H	■	A	E	■	■	■
C	H	I	C	O	■	■	A	R	R	E	S	T
R	I	D	■	P	O	R	T	F	O	L	I	O
E	R	G	■	E	C	H	O	■	E	B	B	S
W	E	E	■	S	T	O	P	■	S	A	S	S

2	3	4	1	8	7	5	9	6
6	7	1	5	2	9	3	8	4
5	9	8	6	4	3	1	2	7
7	4	3	2	5	1	8	6	9
1	2	9	8	7	6	4	5	3
8	6	5	9	3	4	2	7	1
3	1	2	7	6	8	9	4	5
9	8	7	4	1	5	6	3	2
4	5	6	3	9	2	7	1	8

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min ....Genius
13-17 min.....................Scholar
17-21 min ....Smart
21-25 min....................Not bad
25+ min...........Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Tuna Provençale on a Baguette

INGREDIENTS:
2 large tomatoes, peeled and chopped
5 black olives (not oil-packed), pitted and finely chopped
1 baguette, about 24 in. (60 cm) long
2 tbsp (25 mL) extra virgin olive oil
1 large onion
1 large green pepper
2 cans (170 g) tuna in water, drained
2 tbsp (25 mL) white wine vinegar
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

METHOD:
1. Mix tomatoes and olives in a medium bowl, and then let stand until juicy, about 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, cut baguette almost in half lengthwise (do not slice completely through). Open baguette like a book, being careful not to separate bread. Pull out about 1/2 cup (125 mL) of the soft centre with your hands. Using 1/2 tbsp (7 mL) oil, brush cut sides of the bread. Then spread on tomato mixture and any juices that have collected in the bowl.
3. Cut onion in half through stem end, then cut crosswise into thin semicircles. Cut pepper in half, then crosswise into thin semicircles. Layer onion, green pepper and tuna over tomato mixture. Whisk vinegar, garlic and remaining oil in a small bowl. Drizzle over tuna.
4. Wrap stuffed baguette tightly in plastic wrap. Weigh down with a heavy frying pan and let stand at room temperature until the ingredients have soaked into bread, 30 minutes. Cut diagonally into 4 equal pieces before serving.

SERVES 4

rd.ca

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
A trustworthy person has remarkable news. A disturbance can produce a warning. You'll want to escape from a weird dilemma.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Reorganize a sluggish system right away. A threat will jog somebody's memory. You can get ahead by leaving a sad place.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
An amiable manner influences a realist. Don't count your blessings in public. You shouldn't push optimism to a cynical person.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A prosperous guy needs medical attention. Shabbiness will not be acceptable to a lady. Don't be a fool when crossing a street.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Check your documents carefully. A magnificent man takes the other side in a conflict. Difficulties arise when you are too aggressive.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Time passes slowly while awaiting a disclosure. A decent man gives a warning about unreliability. An alarmist rouses the neighbourhood.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A disagreement about benefits will lead to teasing. A friend will happily agree to make changes. A separation leads to a breakthrough.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Show your support when a relationship begins. An eccentric person is making a big mistake. A friend causes a hullabaloo.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Some people will be switching partners. By not worrying, you can correct a problem. Yield to the facts, no matter what happens.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
A lenient person will be receptive. A disturbing tempest threatens to interfere with funds. It's wiser not to complain about hostility.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
A lenient person will be receptive. A disturbing tempest threatens to interfere with funds. It's wiser not to complain about hostility.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
An ill friend will discuss his personal agony. Your lack of concern is the point of a story. Keep your side of a bargain.

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PRODUCTION DESIGNER NATHAN CROWLEY DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY WALLY PFISTER, A.S.C. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BENJAMIN MELNIKER MICHAEL E. USLAN KEVIN DE LA NOY THOMAS TULL BASED UPON BATMAN CHARACTERS CREATED BY BOB KANE AND PUBLISHED BY DC COMICS STORY BY CHRISTOPHER NOLAN & DAVID S. GOYER SCREENPLAY BY JONATHAN NOLAN AND CHRISTOPHER NOLAN
PRODUCED BY CHARLES ROVEN EMMA THOMAS CHRISTOPHER NOLAN DIRECTED BY CHRISTOPHER NOLAN

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